



Connie walked quickly, as if her life depended on it.
In some ways, it did.

If her dad got home before her, it meant he went shopping without her. Which meant she couldn't get a new slime. Which meant she could lose her reputation as "Connie Queen of Slime".

She was given her title earlier that year. Everyone in her class was told to bring in an item related to their hobby - and she had nothing to bring in.

In fact, she didn't have a hobby (unless you counted watching TV or gaming, and Ms Strapp had made it *very* clear that she didn't). She was the only kid in the final year of primary school without an obvious skill. Even her friends had special talents: Nat was nerdy, Amy was artistic, and Allyce was athletic. Compared to others, Connie

felt very ordinary.

Fortunately, the day before they had to present their items, Connie randomly received a Bouncy Roo-Poo Slime in the post from her aunty. She had never shown an interest in slime - and she had certainly never asked for it - but without anything else to talk about, she took it to school.

Her improvised presentation about being a “slime collector” was a surprising success. Her classmates found her made-up hobby so amusing, they dubbed her “Connie Queen of Slime” and she no longer felt ordinary: she felt extraordinary.

To keep her title, Connie became an *actual* slime collector. It wasn't easy - her allowance was pitiful and her dad wouldn't buy it - so she had been forced to develop:



THE 4-STEP SLIME HEIST PLAN

STEP 1: The Helpful Assistant

Connie would help her dad do the grocery shopping and make sure he didn't miss **ANYTHING** on his list. The more items at the checkout, the better ...

STEP 2: The Sprint

While Connie's dad was busy squeezing every avocado to see which ones were ripe, Connie would run to "the forbidden aisle" (the one with all the toys and party supplies that her dad refused to go down). She would pick a new slime and hide it in her hand. (FUN FACT: Magicians call this "palming".)

STEP 3: The Misdirect

At the checkout, Connie would point to the latest *Clash of the Cakes with Helen Melon* magazine. She'd say something like, "Look, Dad! Top tips for a good, gooey pud!" It **ALWAYS** worked. Baking was his weakness.

While he was distracted, she could implement ...

STEP 4: The Switch

Connie would add the slime she palmed earlier to the conveyor belt for the server to scan, then swiftly pocket it again before her dad saw. He would pay for all the shopping, totally unaware that he was also buying Connie's latest slime.

Connie's slime heists meant that she always had a new slime to bring in and show off. Glittery unicorn slime, smelly sewer slime, glow-in-the-dark radioactive slime: you name it, Connie had heisted it (and Ms Strapp had confiscated it). She felt bad about tricking her dad, but she was fully committed to her new identity and didn't plan on losing it.

Then again, she also didn't plan on what would happen after she got home...

