

Stripped Senseless

Posted Thursday, July 13, 2000, at 12:30 p.m. PT

Dear Prudie,

I am a single mother, and my son is 4 years old. His father is not active in his life. Besides all the stuff little boys that age do, I caught him doing something strange: twice now he has been playing by himself, gone into my room, shut the door, taken off his clothes, and tried to put on my underwear or pantyhose. I DON'T KNOW WHY!!! It's really weird, and when you ask him why he does it, he can't tell you. The other strange thing is that he likes to cut out pictures from the Sunday newspaper ads ... no big deal, radios, toys, etc. But last Sunday I let him do it, and he turned to the women's lingerie section and cut out girls wearing underwear! I told him we don't do that, but actually, he didn't do anything "wrong." What do you think?

Dear Wor,

Prudie thinks this could mean a lot of things could signal that the wee cross-dresser is experiencing gender confusion.

Then again, maybe the kid has a budding talent for women's wear design. Experimentation is de rigueur for youngsters, so just watch the situation and see where it goes. If, after a year or so, your young man is still busy with the pantyhose and trying to emulate Barbie, you might want to have him evaluated by someone specializing in children's behavior. And try not to be anxious.