

Victoria's Secret: Thongs for 15-year-olds

Victoria's Secret is coming for your teenage daughters, said Beth Capriotti in *PhillyMag.com*. The lingerie giant has caused an uproar with its "Bright Young Things" advertising campaign, for a raunchy set of underwear marketed directly at teens and tweens.

The undies include lacy panties and thongs bearing such inscriptions as "Wild," "Call me," "Now or Never," and "Feeling Lucky." Tens of thousands of parents have signed an online petition in protest, and for good reason. Adolescent girls already face enormous pressure in our culture to grow up way too fast. That's why an astonishing 78 percent of them are unhappy with their bodies by the age of 17, and why so many struggle with eating disorders. Now Victoria's Secret is telling girls still in the throes of puberty to adopt the come-hither sexuality of its hottie supermodels, "way before a girl is mature enough to handle it." I ask you: "Do you want anyone 'Feeling Lucky' with your 15-year-old?"

Time for a reality check, said Amanda Marcotte in *Slate.com*. By age 15, girls growing up in our modern culture are hardly interested in the "Hello Kitty" undies that their protective parents might prefer them to wear. The average American loses their virginity at 17, and by the age of 19 almost



70 percent are sexually active. If they're not "doing it" by then, they're definitely thinking about doing it. This is natural.

Teens need this time to experiment, make mistakes, and "figure out who they are before adulthood complicates things." Believe it or not, said Jenna Sauer in *Jezebel.com*, a teenage girl can be a good student and wear a thong at the same time. But in the classic "Girls in Peril" narrative of social conservatives, self-respect is only compatible with "sexual purity." No good girl ever thinks about sex. That Puritan mind-set, however, reduces girls to their bodies more than any lingerie line could.

Besides, why pick on Victoria's Secret alone? asked Amy Odell in *BuzzFeed.com*. The sexualization of minors is a widespread phenomenon involving dozens of fashion and media companies. Prada recently had a campaign that featured 13-year-old model Ondria Hardin suggestively caressing herself, while Lacoste paraded a braless 15-year-old Lindsey Wixson on a runway wearing a see-through shirt. Fashion and celebrity magazines and pop music are packed with pouting, sexualized tweens and teens. Victoria's Secret undies "aren't the problem—they're merely a symptom of it."