The Secret World of Children



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My friend Kristin recently told me about an interesting development with her six-month-old baby Andrea. While they were attending church, the choir and congregation began to sing some hymns. To Kristin's amazement, little Andrea decided to do her own version of "singing". This basically consisted of some rather loud moaning sounds, which she was clearly under the impression contributed to the generally melodious choir. From her mother's description however, excited though Kristin was to see this early responsiveness to music, Andrea's efforts were less than musical! So for the time being, she is hoping that whenever they come across music, it will be at a sufficiently large volume to drown out her daughter's early efforts to participate...

The fact that Andrea is finding her own song, so to speak, is simply the first step in a parent's lifelong efforts to understand their child. And sometimes, it's more complicated than you might think. For example, my friend Sara has recently been puzzled about how to deal with her two-year-old son's determination to avoid wearing nappies. This is particularly unfortunate given that he frequently expresses his moods, particularly anger, by peeing on things! His grand-

But if it's sometimes easier for parents to understand their children, it's clearly not always easy for children to understand the bizarre behaviour of adults.