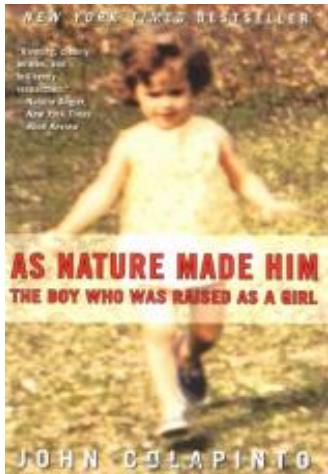


# As Nature Made Him

by John Colapinto

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## About the Book

In 1967, after a twin baby boy suffered a botched circumcision, his family agreed to a radical treatment that would alter his gender. The case would become one of the most famous in modern medicine -- and a total failure. **As Nature Made Him** tells the extraordinary story of David Reimer, who, when finally informed of his medical history, made the decision to live as a male. A macabre tale of medical arrogance, it is first and foremost a human drama of one man's -- and one family's -- amazing survival in the face of terrible odds.

## Discussion Guide

1. The "nature versus nurture" issue is one of the most hotly debated topics today. Other than being of interest to the scientific and medical community, why is it so important to society at large? How could the outcome of this debate affect public policy?
2. Before reading **As Nature Made Him**, did you have an opinion about the role of hormones in the formation of our gender identities? What was it? Did this book change your point of view? How and why?
3. John Colapinto included explicit details not only about the actual circumcision, but also about "Brenda's" painful coming-of-age. What effect did this have on you? Do you think he could have included less detail without diluting the impact of the book?
4. What narrative techniques did the author use that you found particularly effective in setting the tone of the book and in making the account powerful?

5. How did you feel about John Colapinto's depiction of John Money and the medical community? Was it fair? Why or why not?

6. Did reading **As Nature Made Him** change your opinion about sexual reassignment? Were you even aware of it as a medical issue before reading the book? If so, where had you read or heard about it?

7. Consider the formation of your own sexual identity. Discuss what makes you feel like a man or a woman, and how society has played a role in building gender identity, both in general and in your own life.

## Author Bio

ohn Colapinto's articles have appeared in *Vanity Fair*, *The New Yorker*, *Esquire*, *Mademoiselle*, *Us* and *Rolling Stone*. AS NATURE MADE HIM is based on a landmark article published in *Rolling Stone* that won the National Magazine Award. John Colapinto lives in New York City with his wife and son. He is at work on a novel.

## Critical Praise

" ...[a] riveting, cleanly written and brilliantly researched account of a world-famous case... "-*The New York Times Book Review*

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