Thirty years ago, as much of the world was being ravaged by horrific diseases like HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, three remarkable young people, barely out of their teens—Jim Yong Kim, Paul Farmer, Ophelia Dahl—came together in a squatter settlement in Haiti, determined to provide world-class medical care to the Haitians that soon became their friends. Facing obstacles so enormous, they weren’t considered surmountable, the trio built health clinics, partnered with patients and treated diseases no one else did.

They expanded beyond Haiti to Peru and Rwanda, fighting ancient diseases, scraping together funding, suffering heartbreaking mistakes—and changing world health policies as millions of lives were pulled back from the brink of death.

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