



Breakthrough!: How Three People Saved "Blue Babies" and Changed Medicine Forever

Jim Murphy

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In 1944 a groundbreaking operation repaired the congenital heart defect known as blue baby syndrome. The operation's success brought the surgeon Alfred Blalock international fame and paved the way for open-heart surgery. But the technique had been painstakingly developed by Vivien Thomas, Blalock's African American lab assistant, who stood behind Blalock in the operating room to give him step-by-step instructions.

The stories of this medical and social breakthrough and the lives of Thomas, Blalock, and their colleague Dr. Helen Taussig are intertwined in this compelling nonfiction narrative.



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