# Contents

INTRODUCTION The Roseto Mystery "These people were dying of old age. That's it." 3

## PART ONE: OPPORTUNITY

ONE

The Matthew Effect "For unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance But from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." — Matthew 25:29 15

#### TWO

The 10,000-Hour Rule "In Hamburg, we had to play for eight hours." 38

### THREE

The Trouble with Geniuses, Part 1 "Knowledge of a boy's IQ is of little help if you are faced with a formful of clever boys." 77

#### FOUR

The Trouble with Geniuses, Part 2 "After protracted negotiations, it was agreed that Robert would be put on probation." 103

#### FIVE

The Three Lessons of Joe Flom "Mary got a quarter." 133

# PART TWO: LEGACY

#### SIX

Harlan, Kentucky "Die like a man, like your brother did!" 187

#### SEVEN

The Ethnic Theory of Plane Crashes "Captain, the weather radar has helped us a lot." 206

### EIGHT

Rice Paddies and Math Tests "No one who can rise before dawn three hundred sixty days a year fails to make his family rich." 262

#### NINE

Marita's Bargain "All my friends now are from KIPP." 292

#### EPILOGUE

A Jamaican Story

"If a progeny of young colored children is brought forth, these are emancipated." 316

NOTES 337

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS 351

#### INDEX 355