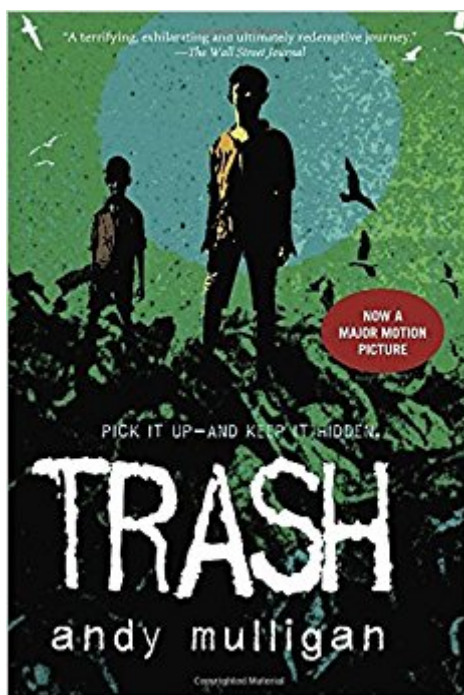


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# Trash



## Synopsis

In an unnamed Third World country, in the not-so-distant future, three “dumpsite boys” make a living picking through the mountains of garbage on the outskirts of a large city. One unlucky-lucky day, Raphael finds something very special and very mysterious. So mysterious that he decides to keep it, even when the city police offer a handsome reward for its return. That decision brings with it terrifying consequences, and soon the dumpsite boys must use all of their cunning and courage to stay ahead of their pursuers. It’s up to Raphael, Gardo, and Rat—boys who have no education, no parents, no homes, and no money—to solve the mystery and right a terrible wrong. Andy Mulligan has written a powerful story about unthinkable poverty and the kind of hope and determination that can transcend it. With twists and turns, unrelenting action, and deep, raw emotion, *Trash* is a heart-pounding, breath-holding novel.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 850L (What’s this?)

Paperback: 240 pages

Publisher: Ember; Reprint edition (October 11, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0385752164

ISBN-13: 978-0385752169

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.5 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 131 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #27,854 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #3 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Homelessness & Poverty #66 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Action & Adventure > Mystery & Thriller #102 in Books > Teens > Mysteries & Thrillers > Mystery & Detective

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Gr 7-10—Three young teens, trash-picker living in the city dump of an unnamed third-world country, discover a mysterious bag one morning, triggering a chain of events that will change their lives forever. Raphael, Gordo, and Rat take turns narrating the story of how they uncover a network of political corruption and abuse of the poor. Each puzzle the boys solve leads to yet a new riddle

for them to work out. The chase leads them throughout the city, exposing the great disparity between the "haves" and the "have nots," and the huge injustice this represents. Several run-ins with the police make it clear that getting caught means death for the three boys. They face moral dilemmas throughout and, ultimately, make good decisions. Their intelligence and characters make the condition in which they live seem even more unfair. While on the surface the book reads like a fast-paced adventure title, it also makes a larger statement about the horrors of poverty and injustice in the world. Occasionally the alternating viewpoints of the book become confusing, particularly when they switch mid-chapter. In spite of this, *Trash* is a compelling read. The action is riveting and the secret codes throughout will appeal mystery fans. Readers will be drawn to this title, and hopefully learn a little about the world outside their own country. Teens who enjoyed the film *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008) will find much to enjoy here.

Kristin Anderson,  
Columbus Metropolitan Library System, OH  
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In an unnamed Third World city, Rat, Raphael, and Gardo live with thousands of other kids like them in a garbage dump, where they dig through the detritus looking for anything that could be profitable. When an important person loses something valuable in the refuse, the three boys embark on an engrossing, sobering mystery characterized by stealing, lying, and police brutality as well as generosity, trust, and ingenuity. Multiple characters describe the adventure, and although the switch between narrators may initially seem disorienting (a priest, housemother, and tombstone maker also provide their integral perspectives), the story flows more smoothly as it progresses, bolstered by the young characters' well-articulated, authentic thoughts, feelings, and voices. Throughout, the boys' significant sense of devotion and morality leads them from lives of desperation to miraculous possibilities. The culminating scenes contribute important elements of Day of the Dead celebrations and Robin Hood themes, further increasing the novel's usefulness for discussion and study. Grades 6-9.

--Andrew Medlar --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I saw this book advertised on the back of my son's Boys' Life magazine and after reading the synopsis of the book I decided to order it from . My 11-year old boy is a great reader but, doesn't enjoy reading and is very picky about what he reads. I am constantly researching, purchasing and renting books for him. He just started this book today. After he had read for his required amount of

time, he found me and wanted to tell me all about the story up to the point he had read. As far as I am concerned, that is a good book! Otherwise, he reads a book, closes it and wants to just forget about it until the next day when he knows has to read it again. Thank you for reading and I hope you enjoy the book. I can't wait to hear what happens next!

A 14-year-old boy named Raphael, a "dumpsite boy," finds a valuable item in the trash where he and his friends forage daily in hopes of collecting items to sell to survive. The item is valuable to a powerful person. He and his posse will go to great lengths to get it back. Initially, they've revealed to an aunt that they've found something, and the fact that she tells this to the authorities brings them under suspicion while they deny the truth. They find it hard to keep the secret (or continue the lie), which leads to potentially severe consequences for them and their friends and family. Much of the book is spent with the boys avoiding the bad guys while trying to keep possession of the item secret and trying to solve the mystery behind the item they found. Trash is an entertaining but pretty basic story about poverty and perseverance. Better: Holes by Louis Sachar, Hoot by Carl Hiaasen and Maximum Ride by James Patterson.

A quick, enjoyable read. I really felt for the garbage kids. Imagine having to live in a garbage dump and sort through trash all your life! I'm glad they had a happy ending.

My son has to read this for school, so I thought, why not. Very interesting, loved the POV writing style, and lived the lessons learned.

The thriller Trash, by Andy Mulligan, is an exciting adventure, set in a developing country much different than our own. Trash brings you into a world that most people will never have the misfortune to see: a huge garbage dump, whose stench and filth is really almost unimaginable to folks like us, whose trash is tidily placed in black plastic bags and conveniently handled for us by Sanitation workers. Most of us never see what happens after these workers pick up our trash; where it really ends up and in fact, we probably don't really want to know. This story is about the place where trash does ends up, in a third world country, and what life is like in this place for three young garbage pickers... until the day something incredible happens that changes all this and gives them hope for the future. Trash is very atmospheric, setting the scene with images of miles and miles of raw rotting garbage, human waste, and the overwhelming stench. The descriptions were so good I could

practically taste the horrible stench myself. Raphael says, "It's a place they call Behala, and it's Rubbish Town. Three years ago it was Smoky Mountain, but Smoky Mountain got so bad, they closed it up and shifted us along the road. The piles stack up - I mean Himalayas: you can climb forever and many people do: up and down into the valleys. The mountains go right from the docks to the marshes, one whole long world of steaming trash. I am one of the Rubbish Boys, picking through the stuff this city throws away." Rat, Raphael and Gardo are brave, intelligent and fierce street kids who live at Behala. They take turns narrating the story from each of their perspectives. You may be surprised by their self-reliance, kindness and abilities to figure out clues and information. Trash follows the story of these three young kids who live in the garbage dump, looking for anything they can salvage from the waste to sell for pennies to live day by day with little hope for the future. Or is there hope.....? One day, one of the boys, Raphael finds a mysterious small cloth bag containing a wallet and some other things in among the mountains of trash. This find is destined to change his life and those of his two friends forever. After finding the bag, the boys are on the run, as they soon find out that the police will do anything to get this bag and its contents. Read Trash to find out what will happen in this crazy mad chase of a novel. Find out why the police want this bag more than anything and what happens to the three young boys because they get involved using their wit and courage to solve a very dangerous mystery that has huge implications to them and many other people. I highly recommend this book if you love books that make you really care about the characters and what happens to them. If you love a thrilling page turner that you will not be able to put down, all the way to a most satisfying conclusion, you will definitely enjoy this book!

Background information for the Librarian: Trash brings up many important and thought-provoking questions for further discussion, such as: Why are people living this way? Or, Is there any way out for them? The author Andy Mulligan has lived in Manila Philippines for four years and teaches at an international school there. In an interview about Trash, he wrote: "All teachers at my school make a visit there (to the dump) and you are confronted with these biblical images," recalls Mulligan. "It's like one of the circles of hell. You are watching seven-year-olds crawling through the rubbish right next to 70-year-olds - and you have in that vision the absolute solid image of what that seven-year-old will become. You just think this can't really be true and you are overwhelmed by your own impotence - there is not a thing I can do about it." Pauli, M. (2010) Andy Mulligan Talks Trash. Web. Accessed on 7/14/2011. [...] Mulligan, A. (2011) Trash. Andy Mulligan's Website. Web. Accessed on 7/14/2011. [...] Smokey Mountain Dump [...] YouTube: People of Smokey Mountain [...]

This is an exciting, thought-provoking Young Adult novel that is high interest and low reading level. It makes readers aware of the struggle of poor children. The conflict the children face when they find a paper bag with a key, an ID and money in a dump site makes for some interesting decision making. I enjoyed the book so much, and thought there was no way the author could end it without being trite. To my surprise, he found the perfect ending, meaningful and not contrived. This is a great book for anyone to read, but I highly recommend it for reluctant readers -- especially boys -- from grades five through high school. I enjoyed it as a 61-year-old adult.

Raphael, Gardo, and Rat are dumpsite boys in an unnamed country, earning money by sifting through the enormous mountains of trash for something worth selling. When a bag containing a large quantity of cash and a key is found by Raphael, the three boys become involved in a mystery which threatens their families, the neighbors in their poor community next to the dump, and their own lives. I listened to an audio version and found the change in voices between the three protagonists and a few minor characters made the story really come alive. It probably helped keep the story straight as the chapters moved between the viewpoints of those characters. This is a story which needs to be told, as it undoubtedly is the story of children in some parts of the world. Middle school students will relate to the idea of finding something and not telling the police about it. If they don't follow politics (which middle school students do?), they will learn that those in power/government do not always have the people's best interests at heart. If they are compassionate, their hearts will break for the choices these three boys have to make. I have recommended this book to students in my library and will continue to do so.

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