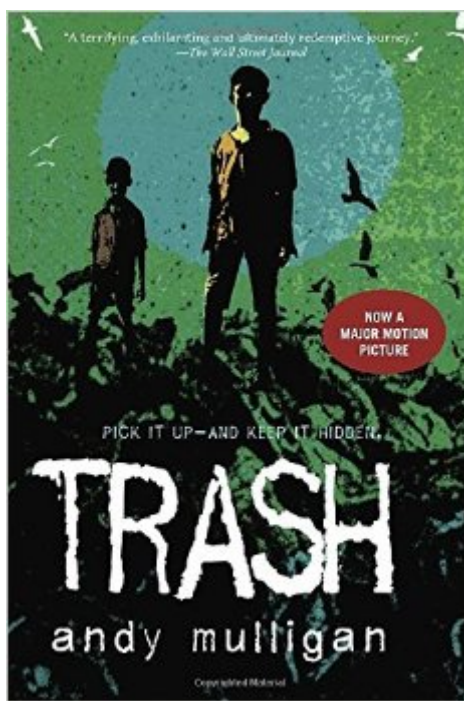


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# Trash



## 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

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

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (115 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #10,834 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #2 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Homelessness & Poverty](#) #32 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Action & Adventure > Mystery & Thriller](#) #52 in [Books > Teens > Mysteries & Thrillers > Mystery & Detective](#)

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

It's been 4 days since I read this book and I can't get it out of my mind. I'm not a regular reviewer, but I feel so compelled to write my thoughts after reading "Trash". I have young kids and we are fortunate enough to be able to live a comfortable life. I've lived in Manila, Philippines where the author lives part-time and teaches. While I have traveled to many First World countries, I have also

been to the Manila dumpsite, the one that is called Smokey Mountain which is the same name used by the author for his story's setting. Oh yes, there has been a real Smokey Mountain dumpsite. Let me just share a bit of non-fiction to those who haven't been to this place yet to give you a sense of my perspective. When I first visited the dumpsite, what first struck me was the enormity of this "mountain" of trash and the strong foul stench everywhere. As I walked, I noticed the springy feeling in my steps then realized I had not been walking on concrete pavement but on a very compact heap of trash thickened over the years. This dumpsite was literally a hill or a mountain and hundreds of families stay here. Adults and children walked about as if this was just an ordinary village. I wondered how these people ever manage to breathe, work and live healthily here 24/7. It is a scene one will not forget. After interviewing a family for a project which was the reason I was there, the family insisted on cooking my group a meal. Being aware of their meager income, we did our best to politely refuse, but it came to a point that for us to refuse more would be deemed insulting to our host who surprisingly, had shown a sense of fierce dignity in their humble 3 meter x 3 meter home and in their work (i.e. picking trash). We sat on the floor of their home and ate from a very low table. This was not a place where you excuse yourself to wash your hands or use hand wipes or sanitizer. (While walking around, it was an effort not to cover our noses with our hands so as not to insult the residents). This family with a mixture of pride and apology, served us chicken tinola, a common soup here made from chicken with papaya and moringa leaves. I distinctly remember having difficulty swallowing the food due to a lump in my throat that formed as I held back tears. I perfectly knew this meal seen as ordinary by the middle and upper class was already a special meal for them. This family welcomed total strangers to their home and did their best to accommodate us. I truly felt embarrassed, guilty and honored. I will disagree with many in that "Trash" is a worthless book. While some may find the book unbelievable, depressing, vulgar or unideal for kids, I see it differently because it speaks the truth in many aspects. It teaches important values for survival--resilience, hope, perseverance and having a vision. It is story of a struggle for freedom told with a setting and plot that are realistic (except for the \$6 million... but you never know). From the names used, reference to the 'dirty' politician, the houseboy, maid and gardener, prison conditions, police interrogation style, young kids who work than study for survival reasons, the way a bribe is asked... they all sound so much like the things happening in the ugly, uncomfortable part of the city of Manila and I'm sure parts of the world that don't quite make it to the tourist route. Just like in the book, there is a real mission school set up by the Philippine Christian Foundation founded by Jane Walker in the Manila dumpsite. Gardo, Raphael and Rat could very well be any of the streetkids or dumpsite boys--all wise beyond their years. Families do build homes on this huge, huge mountain of

the city's trash and earn income foraging, sorting, using and selling off what they can find, similar to the scenes shown in the heart-wrenching free video documentary on the web "Chicken a la Carte". Every chapter of the story is told in the first person point of view by a character, so the whole book appears like a group of people taking turns telling the audience their part in the story. The book ends on an emotional and exhilarating note for me--cheers for the characters, and a personal reminder to count my blessings, complain less, recycle more and help the marginalized further. I am actually surprised at the courage of the author, for this book can very well be interpreted as a political satire although I don't think that was his intention. I look forward to watching the movie version or a stage play if either will be ever made. To get the most value from this book, you must read this with an open mind and the knowledge that almost everything described in the book can possibly be real at least in this side of the world (again, except for the \$6 million.. but you never know). Read it with your kids when they are old enough to understand the concept of money and of things, of good vs. evil. Let them know such living conditions are real. Don't hide this fact. Life is not all roses. Hopefully, they will realize that always having the new "in" toy or clothing will not be as important anymore. Let them learn about the world so they will grow up grounded and with a social conscience, for they will be the shapers and leaders of the future. Let them still read the fairy tales and the Harry Potters. But let them read this, too. I feel this is suited to kids who are old enough to know that lying, stealing and resolving issues thru violence are wrong. These themes occur repeatedly throughout the book, and the boys who commit them are shown to have a guilty conscience at some point. While I teach my kids respect and honesty, not to lie nor steal, I can't help but think one day, my kids are going to face a world where things are not so black and white, where one is sometimes forced by the system to adapt and go along. When those moments come, will I have taught enough to enable them firmly stand by their values and decisions? A thought-provoking book for adults and pre-teens up. I give this book 5 stars.

I read the little blurb for this book, and it said the book was aimed at 7-9 year old children\*. Upon reading it to my children, I quickly realized that "Trash" is clearly targeted with preteens in mind, perhaps 12 or 13-year olds. There is a little bit of profanity, and there is a lot of subject matter that is very mature. My 4 and 9-year old children did not appreciate this book whatsoever, it went way over their heads. However, I enjoyed it. Set in an unnamed country in a possible distant future, this heartbreaking novel about young children who live and scavenge in a dump is unlike many other books I've read in my lifetime. It's told from several perspectives, and some of the events that happen are really sad, much more so when you recall the main characters are young children. If

you've got older children, I highly recommend it. It will be a very unique exception to anything else they have probably read. It's a good read for adults as well. \*Clearly, I cannot be trusted to accurately comprehend anything on the Internet when I haven't had enough coffee OR sleep. The 7-9 wasn't an age demographic, it was a GRADE demographic. I stand way corrected. Carry on.

When I was 19, I knew someone whose father was the ambassador for a Caribbean island. I was invited to spend a week at the ambassador's residence, in their guest cottage. This was in the capital, not the vacation areas - which is what US citizens normally think of associated with the Caribbean. I had no idea it would be one of the biggest shocks of my life. It changed my view of poverty forever. I witnessed first-hand extremely well-off people - people with mansions, servants, every luxury you could imagine - living within 15-20 minutes from families whose houses were an 8 by 12 foot living area for 6 - 8 people, with only corrugated tin or cardboard for walls and a dirt floor. No running water, no WC...hundreds and hundreds we drove by, and nobody commented. I was appalled. This was 1980. I have no doubt the problem there, and in the Philippines, as well as many other places, continues. The one good thing that happened is that I started becoming more active in both how I donate and who I elect. Every child in this country who has a problem because their parent hasn't bought them the latest video game, computer, piece of clothing...they need to read this.

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.

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