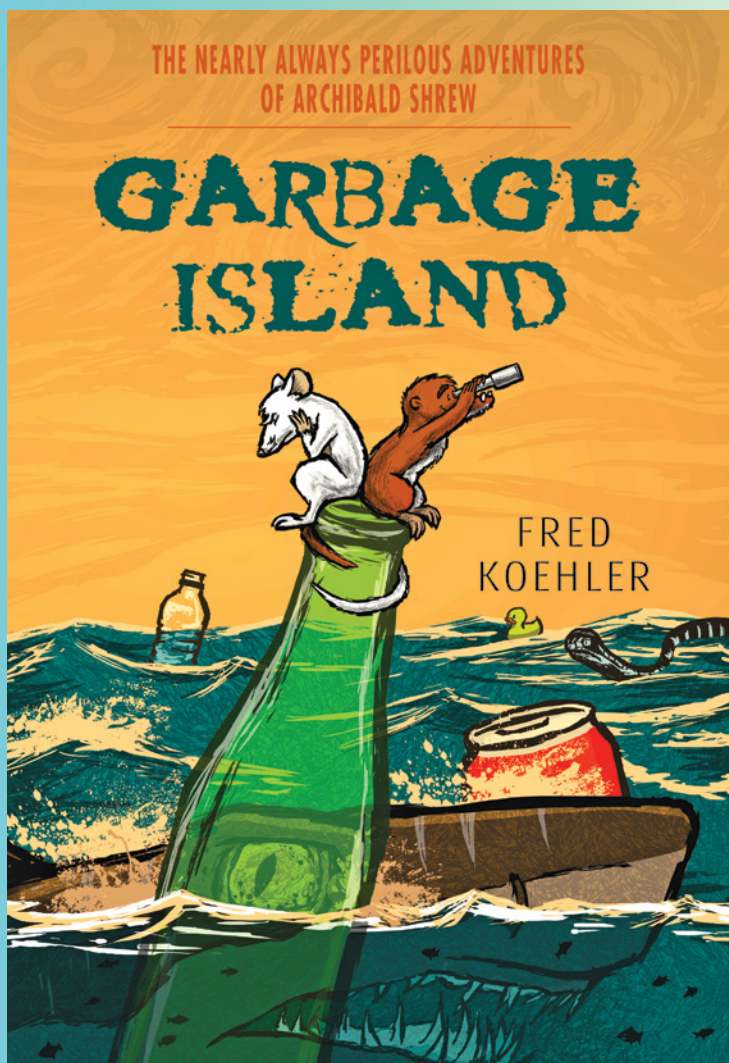


A Reading Group Guide



BOYDS MILLS PRESS

Highlights

About the Book

Mr. Popli, the mouse mayor of Garbage Island, is doing everything he can to keep all the displaced creatures who live there happy, but it isn't easy. Archibald Shrew tries everyone's patience with his single-minded devotion to his inventions and his ill-advised risk-taking. When Garbage Island breaks apart, Mr. Popli and Archie are cast adrift together. They must turn their differences into strengths in order to survive violent storms and vicious predators. When they finally make it back to Garbage Island, they'll have to work together and use every bit of their cunning, skill, and courage to ensure its survival.

Discussion Questions

1. How would you describe Mr. Popli as a leader? Do you think anyone else in the book would make a good mayor of Garbage Island?
2. In the book, it says, "Mr. Popli hated making speeches, but he knew this was the price of civilization." How has Mr. Popli worked with the inhabitants of Garbage Island to create a civilization?
3. The subtitle of the book is "The Nearly Always Perilous Adventures of Archibald Shrew." What would be some of the positive features of a friendship with someone like Archie?
4. Archie is an inventor. Describe some of his inventions. What invention leads to his discovery of Colubra and the egg?
5. On page 92, Mr. Popli is worrying about Merri, the lone bird on Garbage Island. He is counting on her help, but the situation looks grim. He thinks to himself, "I'm just as much of a dreamer as Archibald with his wild inventions." What does Mr. Popli dream about? How are his dreams different from Archie's?
6. On page 111, Archie thinks, "This time, things will be different. I'll be a new shrew. No more lies, no more mistakes." Do you think living with Mr. Popli is changing Archie? How?
7. The Spider Queen is not a spider at all. What kind of creature is she? When Archie unwittingly reveals too much about Garbage Island to the Queen, he puts the entire community in danger. How does Mr. Popli handle the Spider Queen?
8. Once the egg hatches and the creature that emerges is not what Archie or Mr. Popli expected, they disagree about how to handle baby Huxley. How does Archie's decision to save the life of the baby snake affect the future of Garbage Island?
9. How is Edward the Dung's leadership style different from Mr. Popli's? Which leader would you rather have in charge if you lived on Garbage Island?

10. Merri's nest is nearly inaccessible to everyone else on Garbage Island, but it is filled with things that are important to her. Imagine you're a creature with a home on Garbage Island. Would you have a secret space? What would it look like?
11. In chapter 28, Archie's meeting with Colubra is going badly until Mr. Popli appears. How does Mr. Popli approach Colubra? *Diplomacy* is the art of dealing with people in a sensitive and effective way. Would you consider Mr. Popli a *diplomat* in this story?
12. Archie is worried about the future of Garbage Island, but Merri reassures him: "Garbage Island wouldn't have existed without Mr. Popli, but it wouldn't have survived without you" (page 219). Do you agree with Merri? Do Mr. Popli and Archie make a good team?
13. In chapter 33, Archie stands up to Edward the Dung. In that moment, he realizes that true leadership is very different from "giving orders and making others do what you wanted." How would Archie describe a strong leader?
14. Giving human characteristics to animals is called *anthropomorphism*. Think about Archie, Mr. Popli, Merri, Colubra—even Edward the Dung. Do you think we expect certain animals to act certain ways? Have you read other books where animals are given human characteristics?
15. Think about Mr. Popli and Archie's relationship at the beginning of the book. By the end of the book their relationship is very different. How have the two characters changed? When you started reading the book, did you imagine Mr. Popli and Archie becoming friends? Why or why not?
16. Imagine you're writing a sequel to Garbage Island. How would you continue the story?

Topics to Explore

1. Did you know that there is an actual garbage patch in the Pacific Ocean? Find out more about it by reading articles like this one: <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2018/03/great-pacific-garbage-patch-plastics-environment/>
2. On Garbage Island, a shrew, a mouse, a dung beetle, a bird, a gecko, and many other creatures (see the illustration on pages 24–25) coexist. At the end of the story, even the snakes are working to protect Garbage Island and its inhabitants. Research whether these animals coexist peacefully outside of fiction.
3. There is a map of Garbage Island at the beginning of the book, drawn by Merri the bird. Create your own map that could be a starting point for a story you write.

PRAISE FOR
GARBAGE ISLAND
THE NEARLY ALWAYS PERILOUS ADVENTURES
OF ARCHIBALD SHREW

By FRED KOEHLER



“Pint-sized characters face out-sized challenges with heart and wit in this heroic adventure. The winner: readers!”
—Sara Pennypacker, *New York Times* best-selling author of the *Clementine* series

“In this series opener, a mouse and a shrew find themselves unlikely allies as they unite to save Garbage Island. The clever pairing of opposites adds humor, making the gradual emergence of friendship . . . all the sweeter. Dramatic black-and-white illustrations highlight key action. Exciting, fast-paced adventure and unexpected friendship in a “trashy” venue.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

“You’ll have an action-packed time on Garbage Island!”

—Chris Grabenstein, #1 *New York Times* best-selling author

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