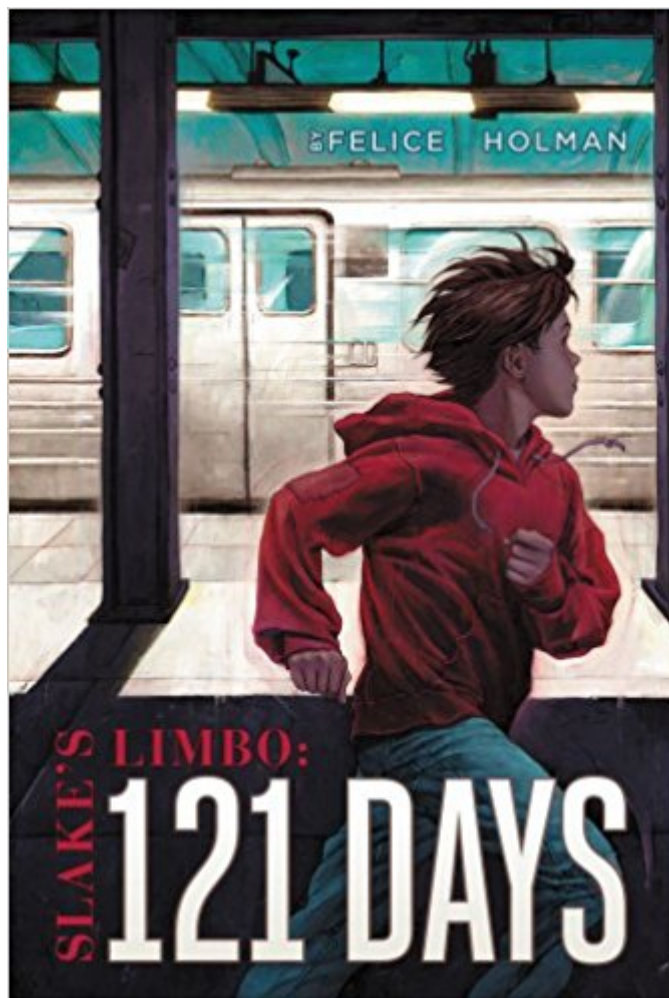


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# Slake's Limbo: 121 Days



## Synopsis

Desperate, driven, harassed to the breaking point, Slake decides to go underground -- into the sheltering depths of the New York City Subway where he ends up staying for one hundred and twenty-one days. This is the story about survival, and about a 13-year-old misfit's attempts to find footing in a hostile and threatening world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"--utterly convincing in its detail and moving in its concern and admiration for the stubborn, human will to survive." --New York Times Book Review --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

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An ALA Best Books for Young Adults  
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Desperate, driven, harassed to the breaking point, Slake decides to go underground? into the sheltering depths of the New York City Subway where he ends up staying for one hundred and twenty-one days. This is the story about survival, and about a 13-year-old misfit's attempts to find footing in a hostile and threatening world. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

I like young adult books that don't insult readers' intelligence or over-simplify life's complexities. I bought this book for my 11 year-old son, and he and I both really enjoyed reading it. Although it was

written in the 70's, it is not too dated to be enjoyed by today's readers. I highly recommend it.

A quick read and one of my favorites. This book will capture your heart. I love this story so much that I buy it to give to friends. I highly recommend it.

I use this book with my eighth grade students, some of whom will be doing their own review. There is a little of Aremis Slake in most young teenagers- feelings of uncertainty, mistrust, fear. This novel provides an interesting look at what its like to try to survive in an urban setting, a situation totally unfamiliar to most of my students. They did, however, seem to enjoy his trials and tribulations of spending 121 days in the subway. Many students asked about, and I think would enjoy, a sequel.

Slake's Limbo by Felice Holman is one of the best books I've read. I think it teaches you to never let fear hold you back. It takes place in New York City. It's about a 13-year-old boy named Aremis Slake and a motorman named Willis Joe Whinny. Slake got chased for almost his entire life. One day when he was being chased for no reason by bullies, he went down in the subway and got on a train. But instead of getting off at a transfer point, he got off at a place he'd never been and went to Central Park. One of Slake's dreams was that "The leaves will stay on the trees this year," so Slake took pieces of grass and started to tie leaves back on the trees. But soon a man saw him and called the cops and Slake ran down in the Subway without a token and got on a train again. Soon Slake got off at Grand Central Station and got chased again, so he went back down in the Subway without a token again. But instead of going on the train, he jumped on the tracks and found a hole in the wall and lived there for one hundred twenty-one days. Willis Joe was a man who dreamed of being a shepherd in Australia. It all started when he and his friends went to see a movie about it. But one day Willis Joe's father broke his hip and Willis Joe had to do all of the heavy work. Soon he got a job at a car garage. Later his father told him to be a motorman so he'd get paid more. He figured that he would need to save up for his trip to Australia. Years later, he started to see people in the Subway as sheep because he thought that their souls were blurred. When Slake was down in the subway, he accidentally got a job selling newspapers and sweeping up a diner. He started to sell papers when he took some off a train and a man saw him with them. The man paid 15 cents for it. He got the job in the diner when the manager saw him there every day. I think that living in the subway changed Slake's life by teaching him to face his fears and not let it hold him back. But one day when Slake was riding a train on the lower tracks, a train on the upper tracks was hit by fallen cement close to Slake's cave. When he went to the diner to work, the waitress said they were going

to close up all of the holes in the wall, including Slake's! Slake went for about two and-a-half days without food or water because of fear of loss of his home and depression. On his third day, he heard hammering. The workers were coming! Or so he thought. Before Slake went out on the tracks, he took a piece of cardboard, spray painted a four letter word on it, and went out. The hammering sound was really Willis Joe fixing a door on the train. When Willis Joe started the train, he saw Slake with a sign. It said: STOP. So Willis Joe stopped the train and brought Slake to the hospital. When Slake woke up, he was in an air tent. A few weeks later, he left the hospital before he was supposed to and headed to the subway. But he remembered that his cave was gone and stopped. He didn't know where he was going, but the general direction was up. The part I liked most was when Willis Joe saved Slake's life because that's the nicest thing you could do for anyone. I felt sorry for Slake when his best-and -only friend Joseph got hit by a truck, because after Slake had nobody. I liked how Felice Holman wrote two stories that had nothing to do with each other in the beginning, but linked together in the end. I noticed that above ground after Joseph died, no one cared for Slake, not even his aunt, but in the subway, he was cared for by some people. I would think that family would care for you more than complete strangers. On a scale of one to ten, I rate this book a ten. I hope you go ahead and try the book.

In school, we read as a group, Slake's Limbo (by Felice Holman), a great book, but I did not realize it until the end. Slake's Limbo is about a boy stuck between living in the subway and his real home where he really belongs. Then main character, Aremis Slake lives in New York City. Slake is a 13-year-old boy, who became an orphan at 13 years old. Bullies picked on Slake because of the fact that Slake was small, even when they did not have a reason. Slake just wanted there to be a year, when the leaves stayed on the trees. While Slake was walking through a neighborhood he never saw before, he walked into Central Park. Then Slake grabbed a bunch of long dried grass and started tying leaves to the maple tree. Then a park attendant shouted at Slake. Slake was so scared that he ran into the subway at Columbus Circle. Aremis Slake, instead of staying in the subway until things cooled down, he stayed for 121 days. During those 121 days Slake met new faces, rats, waitresses, and people who cared for him. Slake always thought of the negative; he never thought that something good could happen in his life. He never really cared about anyone; he never thought anyone cared about him; a few of the 121 days while in the subway, the waitress started to give Slake larger amounts of food for the same amount of money everyday that he ordered food. When Slake found a "home", a hole in the wall, he daily started collecting useful objects: glass things, paper things, metal things, art things, clothes, and everything else to decorate

a home that suits his personality. If Slake did not live in the hole in the wall he would have to sleep/rest on the subway trains all day long. The thoughts and opinions I had were focused on what I agreed with, disagreed with, and how things could have been changed. I agreed with a lot. Even though I couldn't really understand what Felice Holman meant sometimes, I knew she was trying to explain Slake's tough life. I liked Slake, he was a good character and he was an interesting character, and he met new faces while he lived in the subway. Slake did not talk to anyone hardly - he really only talked when he ordered his meal of the day. I first thought he was shy, but I realized he was just scared. I enjoyed the setting because it was different than any other setting in a book. I think the book went a little fast, the book ended too soon. And I thought the book wasn't that great until the end of the book, which was because the book was not exciting or interesting to me until the end because the book did not make sense until the two stories tied together. I hope you find it a great book before I did. Slake's Limbo relates to Phoenix Rising (by Karen Hesse). It is the book Nyle read to Ezra. Ezra was one of the two evacuees living with Nyle and her grandmother. Nyle is a farm girl that lives with her grandmother in Vermont. If you read Phoenix Rising then Slake's limbo is a good book to read. Ezra was afraid of going outside, almost the same as Slake, but Slake was afraid to go above ground. Slake changed and did not always think about the negative. Ezra overcame his fear, he went outside, and he tried to do things like everyday people. If you think about it, Slake's Limbo could be called Phoenix Rising because Slake changed like Ezra. Both of them overcame their fears. I would definitely recommend Slake's Limbo to pretty much anyone who read Phoenix Rising and enjoyed it. I also recommend this book to people planning on reading Phoenix Rising, or people looking for an interesting book, a book that talks about people approaching their fear.

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