



# Blackout

*Keith R.A. DeCandido*

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**THE DARK IS COMING. . . .**

New York City in 1977 is vampire heaven. Serial killer Son of Sam is often blamed for their hits, and a citywide blackout gives them free reign of the streets, allowing them to get away with murder. Spike and his beloved Drusilla are in the Big Apple taking advantage of the situation, as is Vampire Slayer Nikki Wood, who has hunkered down with her son, Robin, in a Times Square apartment where she thinks they'll be safe.

But no matter where she goes, Nikki has to watch her back. Spike has only one thing on his mind: to slay a slayer. Adding to Spike's list of challenges is a corrupt local vampire community that catches wind of his presence, and when they start messing with him, things get bloody interesting.

## Blackout Details

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Author : Keith R.A. DeCandido

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# From Reader Review Blackout for online ebook

## Lisa says

I love Spike. A lot. Instead of following Buffy, Blackout focused on Spike's battle to kill Nikki Wood, the Slayer in the 70s, and Nikki's life. Nikki is one of very few Slayers to have a kid - Robin Wood, who grows up to be the principal of Sunnydale High. The story of Nikki becoming a Slayer and her mission to rid lower-class Manhattan of otherworldly evils was by far the best part of the story, though I did like the outside vamps' perspectives on the insane Drusilla. I like backstory, especially well-written, unchallenging backstory.

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## Douglas says

Not bad for a media tie-in novel, particularly one not about the main characters of the series. I thought he handled Spike and Drusilla's characterizations well and I could hear their voice in the story. Some of the dialogue by the Harlem residents seemed a bit stereotyping, but that may also be because just watched *Luke Cage* which was phenomenal in its Harlem characters.

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## Brent Ecenbarger says

Honestly, this book didn't seem particularly well written after the last Buffy book I read (Pretty Maids All in a Row), so why am I giving it five stars? It goes back to what a good book based on an tv show or movie should do: it took characters we already knew and told a compelling story that didn't contradict at all with the established universe and made a few lesser known characters much more interesting.

This story basically takes a 90 second scene from a season six episode of Buffy and set the background for it for 200 pages (Spike is in 1970's New York trying to kill a slayer, who happens to be a young mother). That sort of thing could be very boring and anticlimactic, but instead by the end of the story every page leads to some mounting dread to the inevitable ending we already are aware is coming. Add in some fun touches of the era, like Yankees fun facts, Shaft references, and the dirtiness of Times Square, and it completely won me over by the ending. I look forward to finding more books this strong in the series.

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## John Strubhart says

Not like most of the Buffy novels, this book takes the reader to July of 1977 and the New York City blackout. The author is a native of the city and the time, which gives credibility to the historical accuracy of the events that occur. Spike and Dru are true to form in this novel. I think that DeCandido does the best job I've seen so far of portraying Dru's precognitive abilities in the creepiest way possible. The back story on Nikki Wood is very satisfying and entertaining in a way that only a person who lived in 1977 NYC could make it. This has been the favorite of my 2011 summer "trash" reading. Now, it's back to astrophysics and epistemology.

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## Ryan says

This was something a little off the beaten path for a *Buffy* novel, as *Buffy* and most of the rest of the cast from the show doesn't really appear in the main story at all. The novel springs off of a brief story element from one episode of season five (later picked up in one episode of season seven) about Spike fighting an African-American slayer named Nikki Wood in New York in 1977.

Being a book taking place in New York in the late 1970s, and featuring a main character who is black, the book is *very* heavily influenced by blaxploitation cinema (*Shaft* and *Cleopatra Jones* and whatnot). There's plenty of talk about how The Fuzz is nothing but a bunch of jive turkeys, and most of the vampires in the city seem to double as gangsters and pimps. Basically, if you like that type of film, and have any interest in the *Buffy* 'universe', you should be able to get a huge kick out of reading it - DeCandido really seems to relish in being able to tell this type of story. I also appreciate the fleshing out of slayers other than *Buffy* herself - there's this grand fantasy universe that's been created by Whedon, and it annoys me sometimes that it focuses too much on a single blonde girl in California.

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## Lisa (Harmonybites) says

Keith DeCandido, from what I see on his profile page, is pretty much exclusively an author of work-for-hire media-tie ins. Generally, I don't see good authors concentrating on that kind of market, but it's notable *Buffy*'s creator Joss Whedon chose to co-write the novelization of *Serenity* with him, and he's written at least two other *Buffy* novels. His style is decent, and by and large this *Buffyverse* novel was entertaining.

The novel is centered on Slayer Nikki Wood, the mother of Principal Wood who fans would remember from Season Seven of *Buffy*. If you remember her from the couple of episodes she briefly appeared in, "Fool for Love" and "Lies My Parents Told Me, then you know her fate and the basic plot of the book will hold little surprise. Given Nikki's race and the setting in the seventies, DeCandido admits in his Acknowledgements that blaxploitation films such as *Shaft*, *Superfly* and *Cleopatra Jones* were an inspiration for his take. He sets the book during the week of the July 1977 New York City blackouts, and what does make this book fun was the slice of New York City history served up. DeCandido is a native New Yorker who grew up in the city and it shows. He gets so many details right down to the subway tokens, the price of a telephone call back then, the baseball teams, the mayor--lots of little things I often see done wrong even in present day depictions of my city.

Mind you, I don't consider this one a keeper, and this book doesn't make me want to read more of the author. This isn't a standout among the fan fiction, amateur or pro, I've read. But if you're a *Buffy* fan, this is a fairly entertaining read that did hold me to the end. Among the *Buffy* pro fiction I've read, it's better than the post-Chosen book *Queen of the Slayers*, but not impressive like the Faith book *Go Ask Malice*.

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## Diane Schneider says

An easy read, which is understandable given the fact that my copy was classified as "Young Adult" by the library I bought it from used. It fleshes out the story of Spike and Nikki Wood, and it stays true to the

characters.

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### **Samantha says**

Don't normally read movie/tv tie in books find them dissatisfying sketchy on details. At least this book was exploring a minor character from the series so had something new to say. But ultimately knowing the outcome of the story before it happens doesn't help. Would recommend to those only really keen on Spike and the Buffy series in general who read everything that can get their hands on. Me I will stick with the series in future.

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### **Ceejay says**

This is another enjoyable entry in the various Buffy novels that are available. Blackout has very little to do with Buffy, but instead centers on Spike and his dealings with the Slayer of the 1970's who lived in New York City. This particular Slayer is a young black woman named Nikki, who, against the rules of being a Slayer, has a young son. The title, Blackout, refers to the actual blackout that occurred in New York City in 1977. While I enjoyed this novel, I was bothered by the continual "jive talk" that was used by the various characters. While I'm sure its usage is authentic, it came across as dated as the movies and TV shows from that same era. The BeeGees did do a song entitled Jive Talking. But, other than my personal dislike of the continual "jive talk", this novel is well worth reading.

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### **Rhonda says**

I really loved this book. My only complaint was in the fact that the author changed the fact that Nikki was pregnant with Robin before she found out she was the slayer... not after. DeCandido did follow the story IT'S ALL ABOUT THE MISSION by Nancy Holder (story is included in TALES OF THE SLAYER Vol. 4) really well other than for changing this one part. It annoyed me every time there was some mention in the book but I still give it 5 stars as it was a great story and the fight scenes were awesome. Loved how Nikki tricked Spike into taking down Reet's group.

Now to move onto the next story in the Buffyverse...

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### **Rachel says**

Loved how it tied all the history about Spike, even from other books I have read already (pretty maids in a row) I thought it was weird that Robin's character (who is 4 in the book) talks and acts like my 7 year old instead of a 4 year old.

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### **Jens says**

## **Leanne White says**

### **Love me some old time slayer action with Nikki Wood vs Spike**

Nice read for any fan of BTVS. Set in the 1970's when Nikki Wood is the slayer. Includes Spike and Drusilla

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## **Rebecca says**

I loved this book. I have been reading the Tales of Slayer and one of the things that bothered me about them was it was giving the stories of the last fights of the Slayers, but the two slayers I wanted to know about where never included. Those were the two slayers killed by Spike - the first during the Boxer Rebellion in China and the second, Nikki Wood in New York in 1977.

This book gave me what I wanted it was primarily the story of Spike killing the second slayer Nikki Wood but it also gave details whilst he was remembering of the first slayer in China.

This was so well done, I really got the feel for 1977 New York and the characters were well done and matched those in the series. For me there is nothing bad I can actually say about this book. 5 stars.

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## **Eric Garrison says**

I love Nikki the Vampire Slayer!

I don't normally read tie-in fiction, but when I learned about this particular take on the Buffy series, I was intrigued. We only get glimpses of the other Slayers (other than Buffy and Faith). I can understand why the flash we get of Nikki in the series would inspire the author to dig into Nikki's story. New York City in 1977? Tough, streetwise, Slayer? Tons of history (her kid, her jacket, Spike's reputation)... these make great starting ingredients for a tragic and triumphant story. I highly recommend this novel if you're a Spike fan especially.

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