



## DarkSkull Hall (The Mage Chronicles #1)

*Lisa Cassidy*

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**DarkSkull Hall (The Mage Chronicles #1)** Lisa Cassidy  
Book 1 of the Mage Chronicles

The adventure begins here...

The Taliath—ancient guardians of the mage order—have vanished inexplicably. A fragile peace that stood for decades is threatening to crumble. Yet sixteen-year-old Alyx Egalion is oblivious to all this. Daughter of the king's most powerful lord, she's popular, spoiled and dreamily in love with the prince and heir, her best friend Cayr.

Her world is shattered when she is sent to the far-distant DarkSkull Hall, a gloomy place wreathed in secrets where young men and women are forged into mages. Alyx's wealth and status mean nothing in the harsh and unforgiving school. Unable to access her magic, she is vulnerable to stronger students, particularly the apprentice Galien who torments her incessantly.

If Alyx can swallow her pride, she may find allies in the handful of DarkSkull's other misfits. And then there is the enigmatic Ladan Mirren, who seems to have an odd fixation on keeping her safe.

The longer she spends at DarkSkull, the more she discovers about the terrible secrets that hide her true past—secrets that challenge everything she's ever believed in. But in the midst of despair and danger, Alyx will learn the true nature of friendship, courage and loyalty.

## DarkSkull Hall (The Mage Chronicles #1) Details

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Author : Lisa Cassidy

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## From Reader Review DarkSkull Hall (The Mage Chronicles #1) for online ebook

### Cyndi says

I haven't read a lot of fantasy-genre novels, so wasn't quite sure what to expect. I found this to be enjoyable and it moves at a nice pace, making it fairly easy to read. I found myself both sympathizing and becoming frustrated with the lead character, Alyx, at times as she dealt with her life being turned upside down - but by the end was fully on board with her character and wanted to see how she handled what came next.

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### Laura says

Not a strenuous read, and a bit young for me, however it holds your attention long enough with emotive characters. Will be reading the second book just to see what happens to the five friends at Darkskull in the next year.

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### Catherine Griffin says

Yet another young adult heads off to magic school, unaware dark family secrets are going to catch up with her.

On first sight, the prospect of another magic school story (this time, set in epic-fantasy-land) didn't fill me with joy, but this is actually pretty good. It doesn't try to be Harry Potter, the plot chugs along nicely with some interesting mystery and without too much relationship drama, and the main character has human frailties without being an annoying whiny adolescent.

The writing is decent, a bit description-heavy in parts, but very readable throughout and well edited.

This is clearly the start of a series, but it reads reasonably well as a standalone book.

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### Lew says

This was a great, action packed, interesting book. I just couldn't get enough! Looking forward to the next instalment from this author. I would highly recommend it to all. +++++

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### Persnickety says

**Warning! Binge reading likely to occur.**

Good news! The series is completed. Bad news! It's more than a little bit hard to stop reading once you get started. And now there are four full length books. One of the perks of being retired: I could, and did, indulge

in a full out read-athon.

I found this author's work impressive on so many levels. Not only does Cassidy tell a story incredibly well, but she does it with exceptional craft skill. For example, the MC (Alyx) is a young adult "lady" of noble position, pampered, and privileged. Definitely a ranking member of the in crowd. Just when you're not sure it's possible to put up with her for an entire series, Cassidy up ends everything and Alyx is on her way to becoming a decent human being; even if it's not a flawless transition. The author creates some amazing characters and relationship dynamics that are complex and oh so realistic. Lots more good stuff, but this review would be humongous if I really got into it all.

Yep, I heartily recommend this series. It appears that most of the current reviews are from Australia and the UK. They're at Goodreads, but don't seem to have posted to Amazon U.S. So check them out if you want more info.

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### **Jeanette Davis says**

Not usually a fan of Fantasy, but this book blew me away! A real page turner and couldn't put it down.

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### **Sarah says**

I LOVED this book!! It is just the escape I was looking for into a magical world with characters that are relatable and develop over the course of the story! I am well hooked and have now read both of the other books in this series! Also love the series has a strong female lead- paving the way for the new generation of readers and young minds! More of this please.

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### **Anton Wasson says**

This was a terrific read, with an excellent female lead. When my daughter is a little older I am going to recommend it to her.

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### **Sarah Greenwood says**

Mystery and magic coming together to create an interesting adventure for Alyx – not that she really wants it. Just give her time though, she'll soon show everyone just what she can do.

Alyx was separated from her brother and mother at the age of five all in the name of protecting her. From what she has no idea, she just has to trust that her father and his powerful friends (Astor her godfather and the king's lord-mage along with the king himself to name a few) will keep her safe from dangers that circle. The thing is she has no memory of any of this, so it could come back to haunt her and her father. Safe for a time in Rionn maybe but you know is soon to change.

Alyx seems to have had a life of luxury with growing up in Rionn. Doesn't hurt that her best friend Cayr just happens to be the Prince. Things are changing between them though, playing alone at five is one thing but

now they are older people are going to talk. Stolen kisses from newfound declarations should have been the start of something great but when the new lord-mage Casovar comes to town he causes her world to be turned upside down. And that's not the only thing to worry about with the uneasy truce between Rionn and Shivasa on thin ice. The only way to protect Rionn is to have powerful mages keeping a watchful eye, but new mages have been few and far between.

Seems Alyx has always had the potential to become a mage – not that she knew – as her mother was one and when Casovar sees her he sees potential. To become a mage she needs to be sent to DarkSkull Hall and well if the king has ordered it there is nothing her father can do to stop it. The trip to get there is over land near enemy borders and even with 20 warrior bluecoat guards you know trouble to going to follow them. She'll give them a year to see if her magic comes out, if not then she can come home, but she needs to at least try. So Alyx, along with a set of twins, Finn and Dawn, are off to DarkSkull Hall. Dawn's power has awakened so its good odds Finn's will too, whether they want their gifts is another matter entirely.

The journey there might at first seem to create the most trouble and danger when they get into the disputed area but that will soon be a thing of the past. They get a bit too close to comfort to the Lord of Widow Falls – claimed to be a mad old man – but instead encounter his son Ladan. His men might have got them out of a sticky spot but he has a mysterious air about him. The fact he wishes to go to DarkSkull Hall with them to train causes a bit of concern. What are his true motives? Is he really just trying to protect her? Didn't take me too long to figure out who he might be, well written all the same.

Now this is a school where titles mean nothing so Alyx is going to have to learn things the hard way. Let's see how she gets on – not well I'm thinking. Alyx, Dawn and Finn are the new kids on the block and will have to work together to make it through. Let's see if they can make some new friends, and not enemies, along the way. Master Howell, Brynn and Tarrick would be a good start. Fengel and Galien on the other hand would be a no. Starts to get going a bit more when they are actually at DarkSkull starting their training. Alyx may not think she has magic but I'm guessing it's going to come out in a big way just in the nick of time. Bullies are one thing but are they the only threat that's coming her way? Who is really on her side and who is looking out for themselves? With memories taken I wonder if she can create a spell to get them back. They could fill in a lot of blanks.

Funny how much she changed but didn't realize until she went home. What she liked to do and talk/gossip about now bores her. She just wanted her friends from school. Expect a big blow out with her father when she demands some answers. A little slow to start but picks up more when Alyx has been at the school a while. Twists and turns along the way. Secrets and lies mixed with mage magic. The place she doesn't want to be at might just be the place she's meant to be to find her true self.

I received a copy of this book from Tate House Books for my honest review.  
<https://readingnook84.wordpress.com/2...>

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## **Bron says**

It took me a little while to warm up to this one but once I got into it I thought it was a fun read. It's #loveozya about a group of students at a magic school, and feels a bit like The Medoran Chronicles with some of the thrill and danger of The Queen of the Tearling and the politics of The Queen's Rising. I'm looking forward to seeing where the rest of the series takes me!

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## Runningrabbit says

This was a good solid read, and a nice and lengthy one to get your teeth into. The novel is well written with developed characters with a definite edge of complexity.

The environment is set around the 'academy' style and this was carried out in the manner of a medieval style setting with plenty of creativity and a strong storyline.

I'm looking forward to seeing the next novel next year and as usual, I'm hoping it won't be a long enough wait to lose momentum and fall off my radar.

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## E says

This was the first book I read in a long time that I could not put down.

I honestly didn't realize that this was a genre I liked, but I got totally invested in the characters and the story. I did find that I got frustrated by the lack of information being provided to the main character as she went on her journey and thought it would have kept me even more interested if she got a few tidbits from the many people she sought out.

But overall, I loved it and can't wait for more books in the series.

Worth a read even if it's not your normal genre.

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## Rosalyn Kelly says

This review and more on my blog [www.rosalynkelly.co.uk/blog](http://www.rosalynkelly.co.uk/blog)  
[I received a free copy of this book from the author to review.]

3.5 stars!

This YA fantasy is super enjoyable, a quick read with intrigue, well-formed characters, vivid descriptions and excellent worldbuilding. I was completely hooked by the prologue, the writing effortlessly bringing the scene alive for me, and I raced through the novel after that brilliant opening.

DarkSkull Hall tells the story of Lady Alyx Egalion, a teenager happy in her court life, with her best friend and boyf, the Prince of Rionn, Cayr, and their outsider friend Dashan. She doesn't pay much attention to her classes, loves gossiping with her fickle friends and going for rides on her horse. But trouble is brewing with a neighbouring country and the King's new mage advisor insists they need some more mages, just in case war breaks out (which, by the end of the novel, is looking highly probable!).

Alyx, aware that her late mother was a mage, is forced to attend the mage training academy for the region, DarkSkull Hall, by her father, who is forced by the King. Alyx's magic hasn't yet 'broken out', she doesn't want to be a mage and she doesn't want to go. And that is why I found this book so enjoyable! Alyx's resistance to magic, her complete dismissal of mage life and her hatred of the school is refreshing compared to the magic training school novels I've read in the past. It didn't go into too much detail on all their classes, and I never felt bogged down with history or in depth explanations about the magic.

There are plenty of hints as to Alyx's history, and – when her magic does finally break out – a big

expectation of what she's going to become, but her resistance to this path makes for a compelling read. The ending is satisfying in that it confirmed a lot of my suspicions and felt like a great standalone read, but also is a perfect lead into book two.

Alyx's friends are particularly well drawn, the dashing prince Cayr, the dark but loyal friend Dashan, the twins who are sent from Rionn to DarkSkull with Alyx, and the various friends she makes at the school, although she doesn't want to admit that they are her friends. Garan is also a spot-on overprotective father.

However, I had a bit of difficulty with the evil bully mage Galien and his fanatical hatred of Alyx and determination to kill her – all the time – as I felt if he really wanted to use his magic against her, he would. I think it would've been more sinister if he bullied her for a while before launching straight into an attempted murder. I'm hoping his motivation will become clearer in the next instalment.

Why not quite 4 stars? Because, although I enjoyed reading this, I craved some more juicy intrigue or blow-my-mind plot twists, but I'm sure that fans of YA fantasy will love it.

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### **Tobyann Aparisi says**

I won this book on Goodreads (Kindle version) for an honest review.

This is a very well written story that is fast paced and very well imagined. The characters are very well put together and you find yourself caring very much about them and what will happen to them. The book has a very nice flow and the author has masterfully drawn you into the realm of the story. Wonderfully, intelligent and well thought out this story will not disappoint. Actually the opposite you will find yourself really immersed into this story and wanting more!

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### **Kathryn Tate says**

This book had me at the first page, it was so well written and professionally presented. I loved the magic and intrigue of trying to work out what was happening in the world around Alyx. I thoroughly enjoyed it....can't wait for Book 2!

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