

*The drinks are cold, the spotlight is hot, and Luxury Literature sits with the minds behind the magazines. Don't flinch when they kill your darlings. Welcome to Gold Leaf Lounge, Aleksis. We will see you in now.*

*Luxury Literature Magazine (LLM):* Why the name? Describe to us the origins and story behind Tea Stained Literary.

*Aleksis (A):* I came across the lit mag community in early March, after discovering Chartium on my explore page on Instagram. I was soon drawn into this incredible community of talented creatives and met Mee, the EIC of The Serendipity Archives (TSA), joining her staff team, as a reviewer, which then motivated me to found Tea-Stained Literary (TSL). The TSL name comes from the old traditions that defined literature, and a desire to translate this into current society. When one tea-stains a page, one attempts to recreate the old, whilst also bringing in the new and the original, as the tea forms its own unique patterns on the page. Another key motivator was the idea of wanting to promote “a home for the musings scrawled onto parchment in dark hours and the art made with the essence of the souls” - which is our vision for TSL.

*LLM:* What kind of writing are you most excited to receive? Are there particular themes or styles you gravitate toward?

*A:* I would say that what we are most excited to receive is any form of literature: whether that be poetry, prose, essays, screenplays etc. which takes the themes we offer and turns it into something original, but that also showcases the unique style of the author. We want to be able to look at a piece and say “Wow, that’s an interpretation I hadn’t considered”. There are no set styles of art or literature that we tend to gravitate too, our aim is to be as open as possible, to not only broaden our perspectives as a magazine, but also as individual team members.

*LLM:* If your magazine had a secret underground club, what would be the password and the dress code?

*A:* If we had a secret underground club, it would probably be called The Society of the Stained Page. The password would be Boston Tea Party 2.0, and the dress code would probably be dark academia dress - white shirts, brown jumpers and corduroy trousers, with Doc Martens boots or Mary Janes. Very dark academia overall!

*LLM:* If you could distill the essence of your favorite novel into a single tea blend, what tasting notes would readers find?

*A:* This is such a difficult question! I have too many favourite books, but if I had to choose one it would be *The Secret History* by Donna Tartt. In terms of tasting notes. The aroma would be smoky, almost malty, to accompany a rich, earthy taste, similar to black tea. The mouthfeel/texture would definitely be full-bodied, but not excessively so. For me, this blend would represent the intense nature, yet mysterious nature of each of the characters in the novel, and the world in which they live in.

*LLM:* Which literary figure (alive, dead, or fictional) would you most want to share a pot of tea and creative insight with?

*A:* I would say R.F Kuang because she is an inspiration for authors and literature enthusiasts alike, and I adore all of her books and their unique plotlines, especially *Babel*.

*LLM:* If *The Tea Stained Literary* had a mascot, what would it be?

*A:* Maybe some kind of anthropomorphic teacup, filled with tea, with some pages inside that it's tea-staining?

*LLM:* Looking ahead, what creative collaboration (with another magazine, a tea company, an illustrator, etc.) would you most like to brew up?

*A:* I would love to collaborate with *Sonder Literary*, or *The Agora Magazine*. Both *Sonder* and *TSL* have very similar, yet unique aesthetics and I think a collaborative issue or poetry competition would be fun to host together. *Silvie* (EIC of *Sonder*) is also a member of our staff team, and it's such a joy to work with her, so I think we'd both have a lot of fun with a collaborative project. Alternatively, I'd love to collaborate with *The Agora Magazine*, because I love the content that they create and how they're business-centred, but also focused on literature. It would be a dream to produce a collaborative issue or competition with them, and see how our two visions could combine!