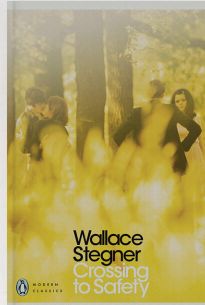
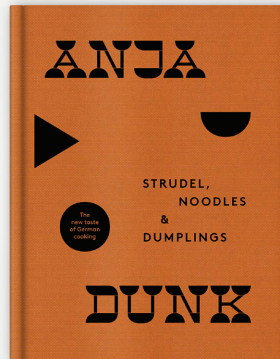
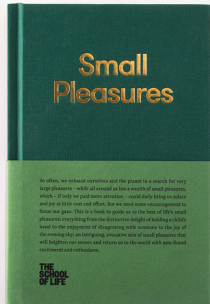


BOOK CLUB



They say you shouldn't judge a book by its cover. But the truth is, cover design can make or break a book, or at least be the very reason that it caught your eye in the first place. For this volume, we asked Louise Gorrod – regular *Stories* contributor and writer for slow-living magazine *The Simple Things* – to share some of her favourite spines. Read on to find out which made the cut and to discover why, when it comes to choosing reading material, love at first sight can be a good thing.

SMALL PLEASURES

by *The School of Life*

There are indeed many small pleasures to stop and notice in everyday life, and this book looks at fifty-two of them in detail, within its hardback green cloth cover. Each chapter puts one such moment under a kind of magnifying glass to find out what's really going on in it and why it touches and moves us and makes us smile. Quick-read chapters include up at dawn, a hot bath, a favourite old jumper, holding hands with a small child and figs. I like to leave my copy on the bedside table when guests stay over, as it's the perfect short read before nodding off or upon waking.

CROSSING TO SAFETY

by *Wallace Stegner (Penguin Modern Classics)*

There's something rather nostalgic about this cover. It's a photograph by Joel Meyerowitz, the renowned American street, portrait and landscape photographer. It sets the scene to the story – the friendships and woes of two couples and their lives told in a lyrical, evocative prose by one of the finest American writers of the late 20th century, Wallace Stegner. It's a book for curling up on the sofa with, though with its traditional compact size and paperback form, it's the perfect travel companion too.

STRUDEL, NOODLES & DUMPLINGS

by *Anja Dunk*

Being a food stylist and photographer alongside my written work means I have a bit of an addiction to recipe books. My ever-growing collection of cookbooks allows me to travel the world, in a culinary sense, without leaving my kitchen. This book, with its striking terracotta cover by graphic designer Sonya Dyakova, has not only transported me to Germany but provided a welcome, long-awaited revival of this underserved national cuisine. It's a celebration of modern German home cooking as told from Anja Dunk's young family kitchen in Wales. Recipes such as whole-wheat buttermilk waffles, caraway dumplings with spiced carrots and pickled blackberries with bay fill the pages. Anja's way of cooking is deeply intertwined with all the seasons, but with the gently spiced, deeply savoury notes that fill the pages, autumn seems the most fitting season to indulge in this book.

THE FIR TREE

by *Hans Christian Andersen, Illustrated by Sanna Annukka*

Hans Christian Andersen's tragic tale of naive greed and dissatisfaction is retold through the beautiful and intricate illustrations of Finnish illustrator Sanna Annukka. Cloth-bound in rich forest green, with gold foil embellishments, *The Fir Tree* is a unique work of art – a beautiful gift to give and receive. I've long been an admirer of Sanna Annukka's work for the Finnish design brand, Marimekko. She also provided the artwork for Keane's album, *Under the Iron Sea*.

SOUNDTRACK TO THE SEASON



A regular since our very-first volume, you'll find our tenth playlist – a soulful collection to see you through autumn – on Spotify. Simply search for @Neptune_home or tap the camera icon in the search box and scan the code to the left.

How to grow

BABY LEAF SPINACH

There's much lore regarding spinach. The legendary pipe-smoking sailor, Popeye, got his strength from eating cans of this iron-rich green leaf, while it's said that Catherine de Medici, the Italian wife of Henry II of France, had a love for spinach so great that, in 1533, she decreed that it be served with every meal. It seems that Catherine de Medici and Popeye may have been on to something, as Louise Gorrod goes on to divulge along with tips on how to cultivate your own little crop in our new 'how to grow' feature.



Believed to be of Persian origin, spinach belongs to the goosefoot family of nutritional powerhouses which also includes beets, chard and quinoa – all favourites of ours on our seasonal menu at The Provenist. It's perhaps because of its reputation as a superfood that spinach has been experiencing a sort of renaissance at the kitchen table, in particular the chef's favourite – the baby leaf variety.

Baby leaf spinach is a term used to describe regular spinach that has been harvested during a fairly early stage of its growth. There are a couple of windows in the gardeners' calendar in which you can sow baby spinach leaf; mid spring to early summer for summer leaves, and then now, in autumn, for a supply of leaves to see you through the winter months.

Spinach can be a bit of a prima donna if the conditions aren't quite right. Seeds can struggle to germinate in hot weather, so by waiting until autumn you'll be setting yourself up for success. Here's our quick guide to get you on your way:

- Spinach can be grown directly in your veg plot, or interwoven between other plants in a flowerbed. Given its compact size, baby leaf spinach can also be grown in containers; try a generously-sized terracotta pot or zinc trough.
- Regardless of where you choose to grow your spinach, enriching your soil will help to nurture a plentiful crop. Spinach needs lots of moisture and nutrients, so apply a general fertiliser and some well-rotted manure or compost to the soil before sowing. Next, rake the soil surface so that it's level and fine.
- Sow the seed directly in drills (shallow V-shaped valleys using a hoe or cane) about 1cm deep in rows 30cm apart, then cover with soil and gently press down over the seeds.
- Water the soil until it's evenly moist. If you want a continuous supply of fresh leaves, make successive sowings of small amounts of seed every few weeks.

You can expect to start harvesting the first baby leaves in 15–35 days after sowing, just remember to keep the plants well-watered and weed free.



THREE SEED VARIETIES TO TRY

'Perpetual Spinach' – spinach beet with narrow stems and dark green leaves.

'Fl Amazon' – a fast-growing true-type spinach with smooth, round leaves.

'Bordeaux' – an attractive dark green leaf with contrasting red leaf veins and stems.