

Bookseller Raves for *A Good American*

“In the heart of Missouri at the start of the twentieth century, a young man and his pregnant bride find an adopted home far from their beloved Germany. *A Good American* is the saga of three generations of the Meisenheimer family, told by both grandfather and grandson. This is a true immigrant song, a two-part harmony paying their respects to John Irving and Mark Twain. Taking place though the joys and sorrows of an American century, the hardest part is turning the final page.” —Vivien L. Jennings, Founder & President, Rainy Day Books, Inc., Fairway, Kansas

“As I turned the last page of *A Good American*, my six-year-old son said, ‘Mommy, why are you smiling and crying at the same time? Did the music book make you sad?’ I paused and answered, ‘Oh sweetie, that’s because this book is like listening to a beautiful symphony: each note is filled with joy, sorrow, discovery, disappointment, and love—for family and the place we call home. My heart is full of the harmonies the author struck on each and every page. But most of all, Mommy is smiling because every note was a delight to read, and she is sad to reach the end.’ ” —Anderson McKean, editor, *Views & News*, Page & Palette Bookstore, Fairhope, Alabama

“A wonderful read!” —Summer Anderson, Books-A-Million

“Alex George’s *A Good American* is one of the most moving books I’ve read in decades. The fact that my family emigrated from Europe only two generations ago may have touched an emotional button while absorbed in the compelling tale of two young lovers striking out for a strange land. However, readers whose ancestors arrived centuries ago from any continent or months ago from south of our border can’t help but feel the tears well up and the guffaws blow out. Possibly the most overused cliché in the book world is ‘It made me laugh and it made me cry.’ I actually sobbed out loud and moments later could not control several chuckles that burst right up through my throat. I cannot imagine a more wonderful read—unless it’s the next book Alex George writes.” —Jake Reiss, Alabama Booksmith, Birmingham, Alabama

“Stunning, just stunning. Meet the Meisenheimer family through the eyes of grandson James as he relates the story of his immigrant family through nearly a century of American history. Peppered with remarkable characters: a jazz trumpeter who cooks a mean gumbo, a promiscuous school teacher, a dwarf . . . need I say more? You will laugh out loud, then cry your eyes out. The prose is oftentimes poetic, i.e., ‘My grandmother’s life had been one long opera.’ This novel is priceless, and a gem of a read.” —Carol Katsoulis, Anderson’s Bookshop, Naperville, Illinois

“In these crazy, sad times, when fear and greed seem to be defining our responses to the problems we face, it was wonderful to be reminded of the irreplaceable role immigration has played in making our country great and the varied ways of being a good American. Frederick and Jette flee Prussia in 1904, making their new home in Missouri, and their story is told by their grandson James. Like the best of family stories, *A Good American* is filled with the coincidences, missed connections, tragedy, and magic of ordinary

life. George breaks your heart with the quiet sacrifices and secrets of his characters, but never forgets the wonder and humor of living. Carrying the reader across the generations, with music and food, religion and Prohibition, racism and patriotism, *A Good American* makes this unique family's story seem familiar in the best of ways." —Leslie Reiner, Inkwood Books, Tampa, Florida

"What is an American? If you look at our heritage, you'll find that we're all descended from immigrants. At the heart of this story is a good American, James Meisenheimer, the grandson and son of good Americans, immigrants originally from Germany, living in the heart of the US in Missouri. I loved this book about their journey to and in a land where anything is possible." —Beth Carpenter, The Country Bookshop, Southern Pines, North Carolina

"Alex George has crafted a most wonderful tale, beginning in 1904, and detailing the lives of the Meisenheimer family. Spanning several generations, it made me laugh, it brought tears to my eyes, and I loved every word of it." —Lyn Dulkanys, Anderson's Bookshop, Naperville, Illinois

"*A Good American* is a quixotic immigration tale wrapped in exquisite finery, from the opening promise of everlasting music, to the closing declaration that one's own ordinary life is anything but ordinary. The lively, spirited Meisenheimers, as imagined by debut American novelist Alex George (British by birth), would be welcome anywhere, but they have landed in Beatrice, Missouri—up the Mississippi from New Orleans after a long journey across the Atlantic from their native Germany. Readers will recognize something of themselves in each of the characters and want to claim this musical and entrepreneurial family as their own. Don't miss this new voice in American fiction." —Sarah Bagby, Watermark Books & Cafe, Wichita, Kansas

"The narrator of *A Good American* says, at the end of the story, 'I was the only one who had nowhere to look but back.' And what a gift to readers of this fine book that he did! Sometimes it takes an observant, gifted immigrant (in this case a young Brit) to fully capture and describe the immigrant experience in America. Alex George does just that, with lyrical writing describing an array of fascinating and lovable characters all woven together in this big, wonderful tale. He follows the Meisenheimer family through several generations from their home in Germany to the United States, where they, much like all our ancestors, become Americans. Once in a great while you pick up a book which has everything necessary to make it a truly satisfying read, and this one is all that! Don't miss it!" —Susie Fruncillo, Lake Country Booksellers, White Bear Lake, Minnesota

"This century-long saga tells the tale of the Meisenheimer family, beginning with Frederick and Jette as young emigrants leaving Hanover, Germany, in 1904 and settling in the small town of Beatrice, Missouri, with dreams of starting a new life. Filled with unforgettable characters, the story is narrated by grandson, James, who tells his ancestors' journey through each new generation, only to discover he doesn't know the truth of his own story at all. Tender moments sprinkled with humor, heartbreaking yet uplifting, about these small-town families and the place they call home. *A Good*

American is definitely a 'must read'!" —Carol Hicks, Bookshelf at Hooligan Rocks, Truckee, California

"I just finished the galley, *A Good American*, by Alex George. It is one of the best books I have read this year. A warm, touching, sometimes sad, and often funny story of three generations of the Meisenheimer family of Beatrice, Missouri. The narrator, James Meisenheimer, grows from child to man as he relates the tale of his family. . . . His voice is always sympathetic to the shortcomings within his family and void of bitterness in the face of adversity. Many colorful characters are the icing on the cake in this delicious slice of early twentieth-century life in the American Midwest." —Susan Tyler, The Book Bin, Onley, VA

"I received a copy of your book and it was one of the best I have read in a long time. I absolutely loved it. Reading it made me want to delve into my family's history and learn the stories of my ancestors. I laughed and cried and wanted to stay in the Meisenheimer world for as long as I could. Thanks for the refreshed patriotism and an incredible read." —Karyn Reis, Read Booksellers in Danville, CA

"This is the saga of an American family, from its origins in Germany through the unfolding generations in Missouri. Music winds its way thematically through this beautifully written book, connecting the characters to create a warm, wholesome story, full of laughter, sorrow, passion and tragedy." — Jennie Turner-Collins, Joseph-Beth Booksellers, Cincinnati, OH