



A true-to-life adventure of five preteens lost in the forest nearby a 170-year old church camp just over the hill from Silicon Valley. They struggle to return home while 'they' are watching.

THE GIANT FOREST
A Novel
by Bill & Mia Belew

ISBN: 1087049342

ON-SALE: OCT 1, 2019

About the Authors:

Bill and Mia Belew are a father and daughter writing team.

Bill served as a communications and intelligence officers in the US Navy. Bill lived in Japan for nearly 20 years and now lives in Silicon Valley.

Mia is a 6th grader at a private Christian school in the heartland of a start-up culture. She loves to read, chapter books about fantasy, adventure, Greek & Roman mythology. She can read non-stop for hours and hours.

Join Bill and Mia @growingupaimi or at <https://growingupaimi.com>

"Your books are good!" *TJV, overseer of orphanage in Uganda*

"Wow!!! This is no small feat. A whole project for kids development."
OA, director of children's ministry in Lagos

"A fun romp. Good read!" *RD, Adventure writer & best seller in Silicon Valley, CA*

"This sounds awesome! It will be great!" *LH, Head of childrens' homes in Central India*

"I love the stories in the stories!" *MD, Administrator of Jr/Sr High Academy, Silicon Valley*

This debut novel in the series Growing Up Aimi introduces five friends Aimi, Roci, Mousi, Sybil and Sycamore. In this true-to-life adventure, the Bunch go to a 170-year old church camp, Mount Hermon, founded around the time of California's first Gold Rush. The camp, situated in a giant forest sits in the Santa Cruz mountains just over the hill from Silicon Valley.

In keeping with the principles of its founders, Bart, Prissie and their adopted son Artie, the present day camp administrators want the camp to be a modern day refuge for children like the Bunch who live at a time when many people around them, including their parents, are chasing new gold in their area.

Each member of the Bunch becomes lost in the giant forest. They must each:

- find themselves
- find one another
- find their way home

Along the way they receive help from new friends whose ancestors had previously received a life-saving kindness from the founders of Mt. Hermon. Each member of the Bunch battles with and finds resolution to problems they face at home from overbearing or neglectful parents, sibling rivalry, prejudice, betrayal and displaced loyalty.

When the five become reunited, bigger battles ensue. To return home they must overcome the giants that have plagued them throughout their lost experience. Can they return home in this first of the series?

The Giant Forest is a chapter book for for preteens who love to read.

At the end of each chapter readers will enjoy discussion questions designed to deepen relationships between parent and child/ren.

The Giant forest = a really big forest or a forest with giants? Or both.

Meet Aimi is the debut novel before following her in the next in the series - The Heliuna Academy - due out by Christmas 2019.

FREE EXCERPT

Chapter One



Aimi Wilby

FEELING BETRAYED BY DAD

Aimi's dad had never been this wrong before. Her dad promised her that she would be okay. "Nothing could possibly go wrong at church camp," he had told her. Her dad **ALWAYS** kept his promises ... until now.

"Kids have been going to camp here at Mt. Hermon for more than 50 years. Mt. Hermon is one of the safest and most fun places around. The worst thing that ever

happens is someone gets a rash, a scratch, cut or a broken bone."

This year's camp experience was going to be like something even her dad could not have anticipated.

Aimi's dad was different from her friends' dads. Aimi teased him, "Were you here when Mt. Hermon was created during the 49er Gold Rush?"

"No. But my grandpa ..." her dad ping ponged back with a story.

Aimi's dad was old enough to be most of her classmates' grandfathers!

"How come your dad is so old, Aimi?" her friends would ask only half kidding her.

"I dunno. How come your dads are so young?" Aimi would retort. Aimi didn't allow the joshing of others to get to her easily. Young as she was, Aimi could get almost direct wisdom from three different centuries. She was born in the Internet Age of the 2000s; her dad was born in the industrial age of the 1900s. Her dad had sat on the lap of his grandparents who were born in the 1800s, the immediate post Civil War age. When Aimi heard her dad start up, "My grandpa used to say ..." she knew most likely, she'll be hearing something from the time Mount Hermon was built.

"My dad's been around long enough to raise kids that are older than your parents. He most probably ain't right all

the time, but he's definitely experienced more than your dads have." Aimi never said that last part out loud.

Aimi had two big brothers who were older than some of her friends' dads. She didn't mind at all having a grandpa for a dad. Or was it the other way around.

Aimi stopped listening to her dad after she heard the word fun. After all, she was really hoping to meet some new people, some more people like her. Some people that she could bond with. Aimi had become pretty good at making friends in new places. A couple of summers ago it seemed she went to a different camp or VBS (Vacation Bible School) every week. "No worries," she'd say. "I'll look for someone else standing around by themselves and strike up a conversation. They probably want a friend, too." Her old daddy taught her that trick.

"You can be pretty sure that in any large group there is another person feeling the same as you - even feeling out of place or alone. Find that person." Aimi tried and was usually successful. Aimi learned to not be afraid of new situations. Her experience this year at camp, however, was going to thrust her into a new circumstance she had never experienced before.

"Why didn't dad tell me something like this might happen?" she would ask herself over and over again.

Aimi loved to read. She could read a chapter book of five, six or seven hundred pages in a weekend. Sometimes she could read the whole book on a long Saturday. She would only stop to munch lunch. And she only stopped because her mom wouldn't let her read and eat at the same time. Her dad didn't mind. He would read and eat at the same time, too. Her favorite books were fantasy. She especially liked it when characters crossed over from one story into another. It never occurred to her that she might mysteriously cross over into another story.

Fantasy characters would go on adventures to find treasures, slay dragons, discover hidden truths. It never occurred to Aimi that fantasy characters might enjoy reading books about the adventures of real boys and girls. Aimi liked reading about Princess Ota. She started wondering what it was that Princess Ota liked to read about. "What's so interesting about my life?" Aimi pondered. Aimi's thinking changed after her first year at church camp. Mt Hermon has a way of making you reevaluate the way you see and experience life.

Aimi was the tallest girl in her class. She might have been the biggest kid in her entire school. She never worried about being big. She loved to skip, jump, climb, hop, kick and run at will. And she did often. She liked to pretend she was a ninja in a sports competition. She even realized she probably could become a ninja if she practiced enough.

Aimi's long pitch black hair faded from dark brown to medium brown, dirty blonde and finally bleached tips as a result of her twice weekly swim sessions. She liked to cut it short then let it grow down over her shoulders. Aimi realized her hair was just long enough to touch her shoulders as she looked out the window in a daydream-like daze on the drive to Mt Hermon. "Maybe I should get my hair cut," she mumbled.

"Huh?" her dad asked.

She didn't bother to respond and he didn't ask again.

On the daily camp schedule on their website there was pool time and beach time. Aimi dreamed of swimming at camp, in the pool and at the beach.

"Aimi? Do you know how to tell when we are almost there?"

"Yeah, dad." she moaned. "We start making stops and turns more often."

"We're here!" Daddy shouted in his usual goofy upbeat way.

Even silliness can be reassuring when it comes from someone you love and you know loves you.

Aimi never doubted her daddy's love ... until this Mt Hermon experience.

**Read the whole book for
FREE with Kindle
Unlimited at:**
<https://wil.by/aimi>

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever felt betrayed by someone you really trust?
2. Have you ever betrayed someone that trusted you?
3. Who do you consider the most reliable person that you know?

48 chapters

Learn the value of friends when family lets you down

400+ pages

True to life adventure of 5 preteens - no magic or time warps

144 questions

Engage in deeper conversations w/ the important children in your life

Did you know this book is being used at orphanages in Nigeria, Uganda and India?

Free digital copies are available for reproduction locally by navigating to:

www.growingupaimi.com