

About Laurel (Bernier) McHargue

Co-creator, *Not Your Mother's Book . . . On Being a Stupid Kid*

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Laurel was born and raised in Braintree, Massachusetts to Patricia (Malone) and Charles Murray Bernier. The fourth of five daughters, Laurel always knew her path would be different from her siblings and would take her far away from her suburban home.

After graduating from Braintree High School in 1977, she attended Smith College and completed three successful semesters before deciding she was bored. Never having been a Girl Scout or having done anything truly difficult in her life, she applied for admission, and was accepted, to the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York. Laurel started from scratch as a lowly "plebe" and graduated proudly four years later in 1983, which was the fourth graduating class in the school's storied history to include women.

One month later, as an Army Second Lieutenant, Laurel married her most extraordinary classmate Mike McHargue and continued to serve for nine years active duty in the Army followed by three years in the Reserves. During those years, Laurel earned her M.A. in English and the couple welcomed two remarkable and brilliant sons, Nick and Jake, to their family. Her young boys transitioned her to civilian life and kept her busy in the many homes they lived while moving from place to place until Mike retired from the Army in 2003.

After volunteering for years and coaching Odyssey of the Mind and Destination Imagination teams in her boys' schools while they were young, Laurel earned her teaching certificate while trying desperately to teach English to seventh graders in a doomed middle school. When the school closed in 2007, the family moved to Leadville, Colorado where she taught high school English for four years.

In 2011, Laurel decided it was time for another big challenge. With both sons off to college, she resigned from her teaching job, emptied out and converted her youngest son's room into an office, and declared herself a professional writer, something that had been on her bucket list for as long as she could remember.



Laurel is currently an adjunct English instructor at Colorado Mountain College in Leadville, has recently completed her first novel based on her first year of teaching, and has been working with Publishing Syndicate since March of 2012. She is the co-editor of this title and *Not Your Mother's Book . . . On Dating*. You can find her writings and short stories in other NYMB titles, in *Colorado Central Magazine* and on her blog at www.leadvillelaurel.com.

To interview Laurel and to find out more about this great book, contact Publishing Syndicate at Dahlynn@PublishingSyndicate.com www.PublishingSyndicate.com

