

## MORNING STORIES TRANSCRIPT

*Love 101: Advice columnist Monica Collins decides that love is for the dogs.*

### **Tony Kahn:**

Hi everybody. This is Tony Kahn, the producer and director of WGBH's *Morning Stories* here in Boston. You know, for the last couple of weeks, not that we do themes, but we, we have been doing a kind of theme in that we've been doing stories about change. We, we did a piece about a change of season – about spring on Martha's Vineyard, and last week, we did a change of place and how significant that can be for somebody, Gayle Keeney's story. So, today we've got a story about change in career. And our storyteller is a lady who, let me tell you, made a big one. Monica Collins was a born advice-giver and columnist, and it took her about twenty years before she finally realized that she was, well, addressing the wrong audience, in fact, the wrong species. Indeed, she was barkin' up the wrong tree. We call her story *Love 101*.

### **Monica Collins:**

Ach. There it was again [sound of pages turning], another letter from the lovelorn. "Dear Miss Fitz. What am I to do? I met the one, but he still hasn't called back. Where do these guys go? My heart's been broken too many times to go through this again, and again, and again ..." [music] [sounds like an echo chamber, voices from different directions] "Miss Fitz, Miss Fitz do you think he has another girl friend?" "Why didn't he call back?" "Is it true all men are dogs?" Dogs? Since when were dogs the problem? You want loving, playful, true to the death? Forget about men. Ladies, get a dog!

The next day, I bounced into the office and pitched a new column to my editor. In a world that had reduced good dogs to bad examples of human behavior – dog-eat-dog world, gone to the dogs, dog ate my homework – it was time for a column [sounds of typing] improving the lives, loves, and self-esteem issues of ... dogs.

[Sound of dog drinking]

That evening, I cozied up to my dog, Buster. "Guess what I did Bust. I quit my job." [questioning whine from Buster] Head cocked, Buster listened to my tale of career transformation. "And I'm going to be writing about you and all of your little buddies in the dog park. What do you think of that?" [Buster panting. Monica, "Oh, you like that?"] And with a sigh and a paw, he gave me the canine equivalent of a thumbs-up. [howl and barking]

Over three years and 150 columns, I've never turned back. [piano music] Sure, there have been those who think I use dogs as excuses to analyze people. Like when I advised the owner of Larry, the troublesome Rottweiler, to understand Larry's food slobbering as insecurity. People took it as satire about Larry Summers, the president of

Harvard University. Can you imagine that? And there are those whiners who feel as though I have no “bone fides” because I’m not a vet. To them, I say, “dogs are not my subject, they’re my teachers.” And every day from my dog, I learn lessons – in love, and in boundaries. [several dogs barking] On one of our recent walks down by the Charles River, my terrier dragged me back through the basics. Lesson number one: all of us have the right to be loved unconditionally, [growling] no matter what we roll in. “Oh Buster, [sniff] oh tell me that’s not from a goose. You’re sleeping in your own bed tonight.”

[Growling and music]

**Tony Kahn:**

That was today’s Morning Story from Monica Collins, *Love 101*. I’d like to say that no dogs, no animals were harmed during the production of this *Morning Story*. However, a few human beings may have been roughed up. [Gary laughs] Gar?

**Gary Mott:**

You know what this story says to me, Tony?

**Tony Kahn:**

No.

**Gary Mott:**

How amazing it can be when you find something you really love...

**Tony Kahn:**

Yeah. When things really get simple . . .

**Gary Mott:**

... that you’re really passionate about.

**Tony Kahn:**

Yeah. When you really are having fun with it, when life once again is play. The kind of curiosity that you have when you’re really into something leads to the best kind of education in the world.

**Gary Mott:**

It’s true, like when I made that leap from waste management to ...

**Tony Kahn:**

To podcasting

**Gary Mott:**

... to podcasting.

[Tony chuckles]

**Tony Kahn:**

Today's Morning Story was paid for, [laughing] in a very realistic way, if not paid for then certainly given significant financial support by <ipswitch.com>, a leader in file transfer software. And as we're always pleased to do every week, we'd like to thank them for their support. If you want to find out more about them, just check out their website at <www.ipswitch.com> spellable, no less, I-P-S-W-I-T-C-H. So check 'em out.

**Gary Mott:**

And after you check them out, be sure and check us out, online at <wgbh.org/morningstories> and be sure and send us an email while you're there, at <morningstories@wgbh.org>.

**Tony Kahn:**

We'll see you next Friday.

[End of recording]

Transcribed by: Susan MacLeod