

LOANLY LADIES

By Greg Atkins

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SYNOPSIS: "Teamwork makes the dream work." Kari and Diane are on a corporate retreat. One of the obstacles they have to overcome is bungee jumping. Kari doesn't want to jump, Diana climbs up the platform to help. Teamwork takes a dark turn when an employee joins them and makes them improv a trust exercise that backfires.

SETTING: A bungee platform.

TIME: Present.

CAST OF CHACTACERS

(2 females, 2 males, 1 either)

KARI (f).....any age, mortgage broker. *(67 lines)*

DIANE (f).....any age, mortgage broker. *(49 lines)*

MALCOM (m).....late 20's, improv coach. *(30 lines)*

CROWD (m/f) Offstage voice or pre-recorded. *(3 lines)*

MAN ON GROUND (m)..... Offstage voice or pre-recorded. *(1 line)*

*LOANLY LADIES is part of the Full-Length work
NINE-TENTHS by Greg Atkins.*

NINE-TENTHS is available for licensing through Heuer Publishing.

AT START: *Center Stage is a 6-foot-tall, 8 x 4-foot scaffolding with locking wheels (or whatever fits the stage... this could also be simply a low wall on wheels.) In the front of the scaffolding is a vinyl banner with "Teamwork Makes the Dream Work" words or logo. The banner blocks the audience's view of seeing through the scaffolding. Standing on top of the scaffolding on the US side is KARI. Her back is to the audience. In the blackout.*

CROWD: *(Offstage.) Jump... jump... jump!*

As the lights come up...

KARI: Shut up!!

DIANE, enters SR with her back against the scaffolding and walking on the stage floor, she gingerly sidles across, right to center of the scaffolding. She is wearing a t-shirt with "Teamwork Makes the Dream Work" on the front. She is not thrilled to be up so high and forces herself not to look down. She turns, gripping the pipes, and begins climbing. While she climbs the scaffolding rotates 180 degrees revealing KARI, wearing the same style t-shirt w/logo, also has a bungee cord attached to her feet with a carabiner. The cord droops down the front of the scaffold.

DIANE: *(DIANE'S head pops up from the back of the scaffold.)* Hey, Teammate!

KARI: Don't get near me or I'm not going to jump!

DIANE: Okay, that's fair. I'm just going to get up here so I don't fall, okay?

KARI: Go away, Diane.

DIANE: I would love to, but I'm your Team Partner...

KARI: Ha!

DIANE: ...and the VP of Marketing made me. *(Flops up on the top of the scaffolding. Looking out.)* This is very high up.

KARI: You think?

DIANE: Damn, it's a nice view though. How you doing?

KARI: I'm paralyzed with fear is how I'm doing.

DIANE: Understandable. Just so you know, we're all waiting for you to jump so we can get on with the day.

KARI: Screw you. I didn't want to do this anyway.

DIANE: You've made that very clear.

KARI: How's the Bungie Guy?

DIANE: Dave?

KARI: Yeah, I guess.

DIANE: He hit the water pretty hard. He'll be okay. He was definitely caught off-guard when you pushed him off.

KARI: See! Everyone kept saying this is safe.

DIANE: Dave wasn't wearing a bungie cord, Kari!

KARI: Well, how the hell was I supposed to know that?

DIANE: He was the guy helping you!

KARI: Right, him and all of his "safety first" mumbo jumbo. And anyway, I don't know how the hell these damn trust falls and zip lines are supposed to make us better at filling out home loans and repossessing condos!

DIANE: It's a corporate teambuilding retreat. It's about building trust.

KARI: Ha! Do you trust Dan Schneider any more today than you did when we started?

DIANE: Well...

KARI: Of course he'd catch us falling off a chair in front of the head of HR, but the minute we're back in the office, he'll steal your lunch from the fridge and your clients from your Rolodex. And what about the candy dish? You want an M&M after he's dug through it looking for a green one?

DIANE: Okay, you're right, Dan is vile.

KARI: And what about Angela in Foreclosures? That evil idiot. In that dumbass word association game when they said "Religion" she said "Slytherin"!

DIANE: I don't...

KARI: Slytherin! When they said "Love" she asked for the definition and to use it in a sentence! Did she think they suddenly switched from word association to a spelling bee or did she really not know the word? (*Begins to slip.*) Ahhhh! (*DIANE reaches out to grab her. KARI steadies herself.*) I'm fine! Don't touch me!

DIANE: Okay. Sorry... sorry.

KARI: I think I'm going to sit.

DIANE: Okay, okay. Everything's cool.

CROWD: *(Offstage.)* Jump... jump... jump!

KARI: *(To the CROWD.)* I will take off this damn rubber band and jump right on top of you losers! *(Awkwardly sits.)*

DIANE: Okay, let's just chill. Take a deep breath. You want something to drink?

KARI: Yeah. Yeah, that'd be good. Yeah, water would be good.

DIANE: Oh, I ah... I don't have any water, but I do have these. *(Pulls out four airplane sized mini bottles of vodka from her purse.)*

KARI: Where did you...?

DIANE: The hotel. I stole them from Angela's mini fridge.

KARI: When did you do that?

DIANE: Right after the circle of trust exercise when she broke down and admitted she was an alcoholic, so I thought, "Hell, she's not going to miss them."

KARI: True dat. *(Takes one, opens it and clinks bottles with DIANE. They down them in one swallow. Reacting to the vodka.)* Yowza.

DIANE: *(Reacting to the vodka.)* I am one giant Grey Goose pimple.

KARI: See, this would be a good team building exercise. Won't Ken in Finance be surprised when they see Angela's itemized bill? He's her AA sponsor.

DIANE: She'll think she's a sleep drinker.

KARI: *(Laughing. Then looking down.)* Let's see if I can hit that recycling bin by that group over there. *(Tosses one of the mini bottles offstage. They watch it fall.)* Wow, there is a bit of a cross wind.

MAN ON GROUND: *(Offstage.)* Ow! Son of a...!

DIANE: This is not Dave's day. *(Holding out the other mini bottle.)* Another?

KARI: Sure. *(Takes the bottle.)* Diane, have you learned a damn thing during this retreat?

DIANE: I learned that the zip line was strong enough to hold Ronnie Mac's weight, but the tree limb wasn't.

KARI: He was not ready for that ride to start.

DIANE: Or when he stopped mid-way.

KARI: He just hung there like a screaming, crying, gay Samoan piñata.

DIANE: It didn't help when they were trying to push him along with those long sticks. Does the Samoan culture even have piñatas?

KARI: No, they just knock coconuts out of trees. Not as much fun.
(Drinks.)

DIANE: (Nodding.) Ah. Feeling better?

KARI: Yeah. The vodka's helping.

DIANE: You know what helped me get through this weekend?

KARI: Vodka?

DIANE: That, and seeing Damon Ruiz from Accounting in those short shorts during Toga Yoga.

KARI: First of all, you know they've run out of ideas of how to make yoga enjoyable when they offer it with an "Animal House" theme. Second, damn if he didn't look fine in those shorts.

DIANE: I caught Helen from HR checking him out. I'm going to leverage that if I ever get written up.

MALCOM enters from USL and begins to climb the scaffolding. KARI and DIANE don't notice him.

KARI: Helen is the worst. She once wrote me up for calling a kielbasa a wiener.

DIANE: Well, to be fair you did keep waiving it around at the Christmas party yelling, "Check out my giant wiener!"

KARI: It was enormous.

DIANE: It was weird that you had brought it from home.

KARI: It was my white elephant gift.

DIANE: (Grossed out.) Ewww.

KARI: Ronnie Mac got it.

DIANE: (Grabbing onto the scaffolding.) Shit we're having an earthquake! (Panicking.) We're gonna die bitches! (To KARI as a confession.) I French kissed my cousin in 7th grade!

MALCOM: I'm just climbing up to you. Don't panic!

DIANE: Oh, thank God.

KARI: THAT'S your death bed confession? That is weak.

DIANE: I was working up to the big stuff.

KARI: How long do you think an earthquake lasts? An hour?

MALCOM: It's me, Malcom. Malcom with no "b." I'm almost there!

KARI: Malcom?

DIANE: The improv guy.

KARI: Oh, God, no.

MALCOM: (*Appears coming over the back of the scaffolding. He wears a t-shirt with "Staff" on it.*) Wow, that is a hell of a climb. I gotta start doing more Toga Yoga. (*Lying on his stomach.*) So, you are... (*Searching his memory.*) Caring Kari... and... (*Trying to remember.*) it has something to do with cooking... um, Dicing Diane?

DIANE: Yep, that's us.

MALCOM: See, those memory games work... no matter how few stars ImprovChick602@yahoo gave me on Yelp.

KARI: What are you doing up here, Malcom without a "b?"

MALCOM: Well, trust is a very important...

KARI: The VP of Marketing made you, didn't he?

MALCOM: Yes.

KARI: Why is everyone so afraid of marketing?

DIANE and MALCOM: (*Together.*) They're marketing!

MALCOM: They'd like you to either jump or climb down. You're holding up the Trust Lunch.

KARI: Do you just put the word "trust" in front of every activity?

MALCOM: Pretty much. It's called branding.

KARI: It's called stupid.

MALCOM: Hey, new thought! Let's find a solution to this little challenge. What do you say?

KARI: Call the rescue copter.

MALCOM: How about we do a little role playing?

KARI: Is... (*Gives MALCOM a raspberry.*) an answer?

MALCOM: I'll take that as a "yes, and"! Okay, I'll be Diane... Diane will be Kari and Kari you'll be me.

KARI: Okay, I'm you?

MALCOM: Yes.

KARI: (*Faux crying.*) Why didn't my parents put a "b" in my name? I question my sexuality.

MALCOM: Is she always this cruel?

DIANE: Pretty much.

MALCOM: Kari, please, I think if you give role playing a try you'll see the value of it.

KARI: Okay.

MALCOM: (*Totally surprised.*) Okay? Really? You'll try it?

KARI: Well, you just seem so damn excited about it, how can I not?

MALCOM: That's great! *(To DIANE.)* You are me. Kari is Diane and *(To KARI.)* I'm you. I'll start. *(Shakes out his hands and rolls his head, stretching out his neck.)*

KARI: I'm having a seizure?

MALCOM: Shhhh. Okay. *(In his Kari voice and he mimes typing on a computer keyboard.)* Gosh, Diane...

DIANE: Gosh? *(Sarcastically, referring to KARI.)* Have you met Little Miss Potty Mouth?

KARI: Go to hell.

MALCOM: Shhh! *(In his Kari voice.)* Gosh, Diane, I think we could close a lot more mortgages around here if we just trusted each other a little more.

KARI: That is not how I sound.

DIANE: Yes, it is.

MALCOM: *(Interrupting, in his own voice.)* Concentrate, ladies! And remember the "yes, and..." *(Kari voice.)* Am I right, Malcom?

DIANE: *(Malcom voice.)* Yes, and trust is the central hub... that spokes out... in trust spokes that go from the banker to the customer in a... trusty wheel of... *(What else can she say but....)* trust.

MALCOM: *(Kari voice.)* That is so insightful, Malcom. So, Diane, what do you have to say about Malcom's very insightful comment?

KARI: *(Diane voice.)* Wow, that really hit me in the old G-Spot... *(They look at her.)* the old Gee-Why-Didn't-I-Think-Of-That Spot. If we want our customers to trust us, we must trust each other, I can see that now. So let's, in the spirit of trust, or what the Italians call fiducia, let's link arms... *(Links arms with MALCOM and DIANE.)* and jump together in the vast abyss of doubt...

MALCOM: *(In his own voice.)* I don't think the bungee will support our...

KARI: *(Diane voice.)* Ah, ah, ah... Kari? What happened to your voice?

MALCOM: *(Kari voice.)* I think the bungee will snap, Malcom.

KARI: *(Diane voice.)* Oh, Kari, it won't snap, but there is a chance it'll stretch out all the way to the ground.

DIANE: *(Fearfully, in Malcom voice.)* It's physics, Kari.

KARI: *(Diane voice.)* You're right, this is a one-person bungee and I know Kari wouldn't wimp out. Right?

MALCOM: *(Kari voice.)* I'm getting confused. I'm still Kari, right?

KARI: *(Diane voice.)* Yes, you are! Badass Caring Kari! *(Unhooks the bungee carabiner from her ankle strap.)* And it's time you faced your fears. Hold this, Malcom. *(Hands it to DIANE.)*

MALCOM: *(Kari voice.)* Wait...

KARI: *(Diane voice.)* That's not like you, Kari. Where's that fearless woman who trust fell into the arms of a stranger who may or may not have copped a quick feel?

MALCOM: *(Kari voice.)* I've never done...

KARI: *(Diane voice.)* Anything half-assed? That's right! You are going to be sooo empowered by this. *(KARI slips her feet out of her ankle strap, grabs MALCOM'S legs and puts the strap around his ankles and pulls it tight.)* You do want to be empowered, don't you?

MALCOM: *(Kari voice.)* I guess...

KARI: *(Diane voice.)* Kari, I admire your commitment and I know that everyone in Team... *(An aside to DIANE.)* what's our team name again?

DIANE: *(In her own voice.)* Team Reverse Cowgirl Mortgage.

KARI: *(Diane voice.)* That everyone in Team Reverse Cowgirl Mortgage... *(As she hooks the carabiner to the strap.)* are rooting for you not to die. *(Getting MALCOM to stand up with the help of DIANE.)* So, let's break that glass ceiling... from above! Which, I guess, technically makes it a glass floor. And no one wants to stand on that in a skirt. Am I right?

MALCOM: *(In his own voice.)* It's really high up.

KARI: *(In her own voice.)* Yes, it is. But trust me, your jumping will make us all proud and will take this role-playing exercise to the legendary level. Also, we can get on with our day and get to that Trust Lunch. Now, we're going to carefully climb down and watch your epic leap. Let's go, Diane.

DIANE: *(Malcom voice.)* I'm Malcom.

KARI: Don't push it. *(They go to the back of the scaffolding and begin to climb down. MALCOM is frozen with fear as he looks over the abyss. The scaffolding begins to turn 180 until we see ladies climbing down and MALCOM'S back.)*

CROWD: *(Offstage.)* Jump... jump... jump!

MALCOM: Guys, you're shaking the platform. Please don't shake the platform. I think I'm going to sit down, 'cause I'm getting a little dizzeeeeeeeeeeowwww! *(He falls/jumps off the platform. KARI and DIANE are wide-eyed.)*

DIANE: Did he?

KARI: I think so.

MALCOM: *(We see MALCOM'S head bob up behind the scaffolding.)*
Ahhhhhhh!

As MALCOM drops, his screaming becomes less. KARI and DIANE are on the ground and, with their backs to the scaffolding, they slowly cross off right.

KARI: Well, that was fun. You know what I could go for right now?

DIANE: No, what?

KARI: A trust mimosa.

They exit. Blackout.

END OF PLAY