

STAR TREK BALANCE SQUADRON

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a white Santa hat and a red velvet Christmas dress with a white fur collar and a white bow at the bust, poses with her hands on her hips. The background is a Christmas tree decorated with lights and ornaments. A red and black striped ribbon with a large red bow is in the top left corner.

CHRISTMAS GOOSE

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Christmas Goose

A Banshee Squadron Christmas short

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An "Inimitably Superfluous" Publication
Temecula, California

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The turbolift doors opened and Kimberly Tycho stepped onto the vast main Promenade level of Starbase 901. A dozen nearby heads swiveled in her direction, and a dozen appreciative whistles and wolf howls greeted her ears. Flashing her admirers a delighted grin, she did a quick little pirouette and then curtsied, lifting the hem of her elf costume's nanoskirt.

"Sorry boys, this is all you get to see. I'm spoken for."

Then, a dozen jealous girlfriends yanked a dozen boyfriends' ears, and the show was over.

Kim started making her way through the thick crowd toward the Promenade's central courtyard, but was having difficulty maintaining her dignity in the skimpy elf suit. She was also pretty sure she spotted a couple of mischievous Ferengi youngsters shadowing her.

As she walked, the jingling of the bells on the tips of her pointy little booties kept time with the seasonal music playing over the speakers. The festivities here in the Promenade were in full swing. A towering redwood cut from the primeval forests of planet Serenity's northern latitudes had been erected in the center of the multilevel courtyard, and colorful lights and tinsel decorated its branches and hung from balconies hundreds of feet above. From somewhere under the tree, she could hear the owner of the station's new Scottish restaurant, Connor McCloud, dressed as Santa Claus, hollering.

"Aye, wee bairrrn. Tell Santy Cloos what ye wants ferr Chrrristmas, aye!"

The next sound was, of course, the crying of a frightened child.

Better hurry... Kim thought to herself.

Brushing around the edges of the massive Christmas tree, Kim worked her way closer to Santa. She'd agreed to help Connor out during her off-shift by dressing up as an elf and running crowd control — keeping the little kiddies under control while they waited in line to have their holo taken with "Santy Cloos". She gently pushed a big branch with a big amorphous green ornament aside in order to pass by a group of milling people, but as she inched past, her back to the tree, something pinched her from behind.

"HEY!!!"

She spun about, almost knocking the milling crowd of people over. The little pom-pom on the end of her elf cap

whipped around and smacked a guy in the face. She expected to catch one of those mischievous Ferengi youngsters in the act, but to her surprise there was nothing there. Just the tree.

Her eyes narrowed suspiciously. Something weird was going on here, but what? She rubbed her smarting tushy thoughtfully, and then she had it. The big green ornament had disappeared. "This situation seems awfully familiar somehow," she said.

"Looks like someone got her Christmas goose," remarked a familiar voice.

Kim turned around to discover that the guy her pom-pom had smacked was Rick the Ruggedly Handsome El Taco Manager.

"It's been happening to pretty young girls all day, but no one's been able to catch the culprit," he explained. "Although in your case, I can't say I blame him," He flashed her a roguish grin and a wink, and comically ogled her sexy outfit.

"You scamp," she said, slapping him lightly on the shoulder and regaining her smile.

"I'm thinking it's the Smelly Jelly again."

Kim nodded. The ubiquitous, shape-shifting green goo was always turning up and causing shenanigans and hi-jinks when least expected.

But just then another small child began crying hysterically from somewhere nearby, reminding her of her

duty. "Gotta go!" she said hastily, and hurried off toward the noise.

As she trotted up to the Santa's Workshop set, Connor McCloud saw her and called, "Och, lass! Gi' us a hand, will ye?" He handed off his latest little victim to Kim, and the tot immediately stopped bawling. With an admiring look, he said, "Ye have the touch, lass."

Kim patted the quieted child gently on the rump and sent him scampering back to his mother, who was waiting on the sidelines, and walked back over to Connor, feeling proud of the way she'd handled the kid.

Connor took a long, appreciative look at her in her slinky, sexy elf costume and said through his Scottish burr, "I ken see what yerrr boyfrrrien's gettin' ferrr chrrristmas...."

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