

## 6854 The Black Lord

The first bout already established the immense advantages granted by Casella's Command Field.

The next bouts only reinforced the advantages that she freely bestowed onto other mechs.

100 Barons easily crushed 500 unempowered mechs.

100 Knights struggled and ultimately overcame 500 unempowered mechs, but not without suffering a dozen or so casualties.

50 Viscounts quickly vanquished 550 unempowered mechs, though the disparity in numbers was so great at the start that a handful of the former could not escape elimination.

It was only when the ratios became more absurd that the Saint Commander experienced a true challenge.

Depending on the type of mechs she was able to empower and what sort of opposition she faced, she could easily win fights where her forces were outnumbered 15 to 1!

This was a ridiculously high ratio and one that promised a lot of devastation in the future!

"I am rather worried." Gloriana couldn't help but remark. "If Casella is able to Commandeer an entire mech division to this degree, everyone will set extremely high expectations on our limited mech forces. Both allies and enemies will take it for granted that we can easily fight against hundreds of thousands of elite phasefighters and several alien assault

fleets. Casella's Command Field will define our forces so much that everyone will take it for granted that we can win these lopsided battles. One day, the native aliens will attempt to outnumber us by 30 to 1 or 50 to 1. We cannot possibly win a battle where we are so badly outnumbered."

Her concerns were valid. If the Saint Commander became an iconic presence in the Premier Fleet, then everyone would automatically treat it as a fighting force that fielded at least 15 more mechs.

The weak would cower away, but the strong would remain fearless and hunt the Premier Fleet down!

"It is still worth it to have the Saint Commander around." Ves told his wife. "At the very least, our forces will become so highly regarded by our enemies that not many of them have the guts to confront

us. The frequency of battles initiated by the native aliens will be much lower once Casella has earned more infamy among our foes. Even if we eventually get hunted down by a powerful alien fleet that can actually defeat us, Casella has access to many powerful features. It is not impossible for her to leverage the assets and resources at her disposal to gain tactical or strategic superiority on the battlefield. At worst, we can do our best to run away."

Ves could not allow fears of disproportionate enemy response stop him from making full use of the Minerva Mark II in his Premier Fleet.

Might was right. This rule became especially apt in the current era.

It was better to hold greater power and hope that stronger enemies had better

things to do than hunt down the Premier Fleet.

"Let's move on to the final battery of tests." Ves suggested. "We have seen how ridiculously powerful the mechs empowered by the Minerva Mark II can be at this level. True resonance holds an overwhelming advantage against opponents that lack its protection. What will happen if the Minerva has to confront another ace mech?"

Ves and everyone else glanced at the Terran ace mech that had yet to take any action.

The Black Lord was a finely honed ace multipurpose mech. Its iconic tier 2 sword contained a lot of power and animosity.

The Sirocco was made to annihilate.

Now that the Minerva Mark II needed to

test her mettle against another ace mech, the Black Lord became more active and flew forward.

"This is not going to be pleasant for Casella." Gloriana said with a frown. "The Wind of Destruction is not as renowned as the Mace of Retaliation or the Messenger of Silence, but he is still a senior ace pilot that has honed himself in battle. He is five times older than our Saint Commander and has much more experience under his belt."

"This is not about winning and losing. This is about gathering data and giving Casella a valuable lesson on what will happen if she confronts a hostile ace mech." Ves told his wife.

They just needed to stack the deck so that Casella still had enough power to resist her inevitable defeat.

Ves opened a direct channel to the Black Lord.

"Saint Alessandro Devos, greetings from the Larkinson Clan. According to our planning, we require your services in determining how effectively the Minerva Mark II along with hundreds of subordinate mechs can impede you. It is pointless to conduct this test when you are fighting at your full power. Can you dial back your performance so that you can match the power of a junior ace pilot?"

**"Holding back... is not in my nature."** The Wind of Destruction responded with very obvious irritation. **"For the sake of what you have done for the Devos Ancient Clan, I can reluctantly attempt to conform to your request."**

The Terran ace pilot already began to make adjustments. The Saint Kingdom

surrounding his ace mech visibly weakened.

Although the Black Lord still came across as a significantly more powerful adversary than the Minerva Mark II, the disparity was a little less than before.

Ves could only shrug and proceed with the test.

"Casella, you will have 600 first-class multipurpose mechs at your disposal. These machines should all be familiar to you as you have empowered them or fought against them not too long ago. Try your best to inconvenience your sole adversary."

The Saint Commander knew how little chance she had of defeating the Black Lord.

That did not mean she gave up before the



bout had even started.

As a saint, she needed to maintain her confidence and dignity of her rank.

Even if a victory was out of reach, she still needed to get as close to it as possible.

The lessons she could learn from this experience could ultimately help her perform better in the face of overwhelming opposition.

The bout started after the two sides moved away from each other.

Immediately after the countdown was over, the Black Lord raced across space and flew forward at a blazingly high speed!

Distant energy beams already came in from afar.

Many of the multipurpose mechs  
Commandeered or Enfeoffed by the Saint

Commander expertly targeted the areas in which the Black Lord might evade towards.

These guesses mostly turned out to be wrong due to the uncanny intuition of the Wind of Destruction.

Casella had to combine the firepower of all 600 empowered mechs to box in the Black Lord and guarantee at least a handful of devastating attacks.

However, the Black Lord's Saint Kingdom was so ridiculously strong that it negated pretty much all attacks.

The true resonance empowerment that Casella distributed to all 600 mechs amounted to nothing in comparison!

In a contest between ace pilots, the one with the stronger Saint Kingdom could easily crush anyone that was weaker.

Casella was especially at a disadvantage in this contest. Not only was her resonance strength a lot weaker, she also dispersed her extraordinary willpower.

This was the worst thing she could do when fighting against another ace pilot!

Only concentrated attacks could truly harm a powerful ace mech.

While the many attacks launched by the first-class multipurpose mechs were still strong enough to pose a certain degree of threat to the Black Lord, in practice their effectiveness was pretty low.

Over 90 percent of ranged attacks simply missed their target!

The few attacks that did strike the Black Lord mostly bounced off its armor.

Unless multiple attacks repeatedly struck the same section of armor, it was too

unrealistic to hope that all of these massed attacks could seriously harm the Black Lord.

"The Black Lord hasn't retaliated with its own ranged armaments." Gloriana noted.

If this was a real battle, then the Terran ace mech would have shredded the opposing machines with its integrated weapon modules. There was no need for the Black Lord to waste so much time on closing the distance.

The Wind of Destruction evidently did not want to end this session too soon. He continued to direct his Black Lord to weaken and block all incoming attacks.

Once the ace multipurpose mech finally came close enough to use its blade, the Black Lord dramatically swung the Sirocco a single time.

A large but dispersing wave of resonance-empowered destructive energies swooped forward before engulfing 20 empowered mechs!

Each of them immediately suffered so much damage that their energy shields dipped below 50 percent integrity without exception!

"Do not try to resist the Black Lord's attacks. Try to evade them whenever possible!"

The Black Lord became a lot harder to shoot down now that it had entered the midst of the formation of opposing mechs.

The ace mech began to swing destructive energy waves in every direction. Its dominating performance intimidated everyone, causing opponents to fight back with less confidence than before.

Yet the empowered mechs did not give up. Their mech pilots drove their machines forward and tried to entangle the Black Lord in a crush of mechanical bodies.

The Terran mechs were most eager to earn the honor of being able to lock blades with the powerful ace mech.

Although their courage was commendable, they were not strong enough to inconvenience the Wind of Destruction!

The Black Lord lazily swung its tier 2 Destroyer sword, releasing large waves of destructive energies that unceasingly eliminated any mech that got caught by the attacks.

Although there were enough empowered mechs that managed to circle around evade these attacks, the Black Lord instantly turned around and struck the

Terran mechs with such great speed that none of the machines were able to respond in time!

Even if Casella was powerful enough to perceive the movements of the Terran ace mech, her Knights and Viscounts were simply too slow to react in time!

The Wind of Destruction directly demonstrated why it was a bad idea for weaker enemies to confront a genuine ace mech.

Whether it was offense, defense or mobility, an ace mech that possessed advantages in all three areas could outright crush its opposition without fail.

No matter what tactic Casella employed, the Black Lord resolved all threats with overwhelming force.

The crushing performance of this singular

enemy stripped Casella of all of the pride and satisfaction she accrued from the previous bouts.

After continually winning one lopsided victory after another, the Saint Commander received a necessary reality check that caused her to become more acutely aware of her vulnerabilities.

She was still too weak. Even if ace command mechs were disadvantages against pure combat-oriented ace mechs, she still found it shameful for the Minerva Mark II to fail to pose a serious threat against her adversary.

After the Black Lord quickly hunted down the remaining Viscounts and Knights, the ace mech floated before the Minerva Mark II.

Its Saint Kingdom pressed onto Casella



and the Minerva. It was unnerving to fall into the powerful domain field of another ace pilot.

The Wind of Destruction's Saint Kingdom conveyed many urges and desires. His domain field expressed his eagerness to fight and destroy his foes. It was not particularly subtle or deep, but it worked out decently well for the ace pilot.

**"For an ace commander, your performance is... disappointing. These 'Commandeered' and 'Enfeoffed' mechs pose no threat against my ace mech. Further tests involving my Black Lord are redundant as long as you fail to develop your power to penetrate defenses of mechs such as my own."**

The testing session came to an end.

The Wind of Destruction had issued his

verdict and promptly returned to its motherhood.

It was clear that Casella did not take the other ace pilot's advice all that well.

Fortunately, she was mature enough to understand that she did not let this defeat derail her plans.

"Let us call this day." Ves suggested.

"We have yet to test the Mindstorm Alloy."

"We cannot recklessly launch into space and create psychic storms. We can conduct this sequence of tests another day. Casella needs to take a break and reflect on her experiences."