# Down the Rabbit Hole: A Strategic Deconstruction of the Maliss Archetype

## Section 1: The Maliss Protocol - An Archetype Overview

### 1.1 Introduction to the Core Identity

The Maliss archetype, which debuted in the *Crossover Breakers* set, is a DARK Cyberse Link-based strategy that has established itself as a formidable force in the competitive metagame.1 The archetype's central mechanic is a highly synergistic and recursive engine that revolves around a unique gameplay loop: banishing its own monsters to activate their effects, which in turn facilitates rapid Link climbing into a suite of powerful boss monsters.3 This design philosophy results in a resilient and explosive strategy capable of generating significant card advantage from a single card. The deck's competitive viability is well-documented, demonstrating high win rates, particularly when establishing its board going first.5 The core strategy is to leverage this recursive loop to construct an endboard laden with multiple points of interaction, systematically dismantling an opponent's strategy before they can execute it.

The archetype redefines the function of the banished zone. For most strategies, this zone represents a state of permanent or near-permanent removal. For Maliss, however, it functions as a dynamic and readily accessible resource pool, operating as a second hand or a more proactive graveyard. This fundamental paradigm shift is the primary source of the deck's resilience and explosive potential. The main deck monsters are designed to Special Summon themselves immediately upon being banished, meaning the act of banishing them is not a cost but a catalyst.7 Cards like Maliss <P> Dormouse and the Field Spell Maliss in Underground are engineered to populate this zone directly from the Deck, effectively "searching" combo pieces into this accessible area.7 Subsequently, Trap Cards like Maliss <C> GWC-06 can summon monsters directly from this zone.11 Consequently, a Maliss player does not lose resources when a card is banished; they are merely relocating it to a different, often more advantageous, area of play. This warps the traditional calculus of card advantage, as a player with several "Maliss" cards in the banished zone is often in a more commanding position than one with those same cards in hand or graveyard.

### 1.2 Thematic and Aesthetic Analysis

The design of the Maliss archetype is a creative fusion of two distinct concepts: the whimsical and surreal world of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and the clandestine, disruptive nature of computer viruses and malware.1 This duality is evident in the card names, which reference iconic characters such as the Dormouse, the White Rabbit, and the Cheshire Cat, while their prefixes—<P> (Player), <Q> (Queen), and <C> (Code)—allude to programming and digital constructs.4 The archetype's lore describes the characters as hackers who steal secrets for their "secret tea parties," further cementing this thematic blend.3 This theme is not merely aesthetic; it is deeply integrated into the archetype's mechanics. The monsters "infect" the banished zone and continuously recur themselves, much like a persistent computer virus that evades deletion. The Trap Cards, which can be activated on the turn they are set, function like executable subroutines or "viruses" that are deployed to disrupt the opponent's system.4

### 1.3 The Central Gameplay Loop

The fundamental strategy of the Maliss archetype can be distilled into a consistent, five-stage gameplay loop executed on the first turn:

1. **Initiate:** The sequence begins with a "one-card starter," typically the Normal Summon of Maliss <P> Dormouse or Maliss <P> White Rabbit.3
2. **Banish:** The starter's effect is used to banish another key "Maliss" monster directly from the Deck. Dormouse, for example, can banish any "Maliss" monster as its primary effect.7
3. **Recur:** The monster that was just banished triggers its own effect, allowing the player to pay a small Life Point cost (typically 300 LP) to Special Summon it to the field.7 This immediately places two monsters on the board from a single Normal Summon.
4. **Link Climb:** With two or more monsters on the field, the player begins the process of "Link climbing." This involves using the initial monsters to summon generic Cyberse Link monsters (such as Splash Mage or Haggard Lizardose) and, ultimately, the archetype's own powerful Link-3 boss monsters.3
5. **Control:** The process culminates in an established board consisting of multiple "Maliss" Link monsters and one or more set "Maliss" Trap Cards. This endboard provides several layers of interruption, including monster effect negation, graveyard banishing, and targeted removal, all designed to control the game during the opponent's turn.3 A key feature of this control scheme is the unique nature of the "Maliss" Traps, which can be activated the turn they are set by banishing a "Maliss" monster, turning them into potent, immediate threats.3

## Section 2: The Mainframe - Core Monster Roster Analysis

The consistency and power of the Maliss archetype are rooted in its compact but highly efficient roster of Main Deck monsters. Each monster serves a distinct but complementary role, ensuring that the core gameplay loop can be initiated and extended through multiple pathways.

### 2.1 Maliss Dormouse - The Primary Initiator

Maliss <P> Dormouse is widely regarded as the deck's premier one-card starter, offering the most direct path to the full combo sequence.3

* **Role:** Its primary function is to serve as the initial Normal Summon that populates the banished zone with a key combo piece.
* **Effects Analysis:**
  + **On-field Ignition Effect:** During the Main Phase, its controller can banish one "Maliss" monster from the Deck. This is the core starter effect. As a secondary benefit, all "Maliss" monsters on the field gain 600 ATK for the rest of the turn, a bonus that can be instrumental in securing one-turn kills (OTKs) later in the game with Maliss <Q> Hearts Crypter.4
  + **On-field Continuous Effect:** While a "Maliss" Link Monster points to Dormouse, that Link Monster cannot be destroyed by card effects, providing valuable protection.7
  + **"When Banished" Effect:** If Dormouse itself is banished, its controller can pay 300 LP to Special Summon it. This effect locks the player into summoning only Link Monsters from the Extra Deck for the rest of the turn, a negligible restriction for the archetype.7

### 2.2 Maliss White Rabbit - The Secondary Initiator & Toolboxing

While Dormouse provides the most direct monster setup, Maliss <P> White Rabbit serves as the deck's other crucial one-card starter, focusing on accessing the archetype's versatile Trap Card lineup.3

* **Role:** An alternative Normal Summon starter that sets up combo extension or disruption via the archetype's traps.
* **Effects Analysis:**
  + **On-Summon Trigger Effect:** If White Rabbit is Normal or Special Summoned, its controller can Set one "Maliss" Trap directly from the Deck. This is the primary method of accessing Maliss <C> TB-11 to extend combos or Maliss <C> MTP-07 to prepare a disruption for the opponent's turn.8
  + **On-field Continuous Effect:** The controller takes no battle damage from battles involving a "Maliss" Link Monster that points to White Rabbit. This is a minor protective effect that rarely becomes a deciding factor in games.4
  + **"When Banished" Effect:** Identical to Dormouse, it can be Special Summoned from the banished zone for 300 LP, imposing the same Link-only summoning restriction.8

### 2.3 Maliss Chessy Cat - The Draw Engine & Extender

Maliss <P> Chessy Cat is not a combo starter on its own but serves as an invaluable extender and consistency tool, enabling the deck to dig for non-engine cards or play through disruption.3

* **Role:** A mid-combo extender that converts extra "Maliss" cards in hand into new draws.
* **Effects Analysis:**
  + **On-field Ignition Effect:** Its controller can banish one "Maliss" *card* (monster, spell, or trap) from their hand to draw two cards. This effect is excellent for improving hand quality, baiting opponent's negations, or triggering the banished effect of the card discarded.9
  + **On-field Continuous Effect:** Any monster destroyed by battle with a "Maliss" Link Monster pointing to Chessy Cat is banished instead of being sent to the GY, providing incidental graveyard disruption.9
  + **"When Banished" Effect:** It shares the same self-revival effect as its peers, returning to the field from the banished zone for 300 LP under a Link-lock.9

### 2.4 Maliss March Hare - The Extender & Recovery Tool

Maliss <P> March Hare is a more recent addition to the archetype that provides a powerful, non-Normal Summon-reliant extension from the hand and a crucial recovery option for longer games.

* **Role:** A free Special Summon from the hand that enables more explosive plays and a resource recursion tool for follow-up turns.
* **Effects Analysis:**
  + **In-hand Quick Effect:** During the Main Phase, its controller can banish another "Maliss" card from their hand or GY to Special Summon March Hare. This provides an additional body on the field without consuming the turn's Normal Summon, making it an excellent extender.12
  + **"When Banished" Effect:** If March Hare is banished, its controller can pay 300 LP to target one of their banished "Maliss" monsters and add it back to the hand. This is a vital tool for recovering resources and ensuring the deck can continue to play on subsequent turns.12
  + **On-field Continuous Effect:** "Maliss" Link Monsters that point to March Hare cannot be targeted by an opponent's card effects, offering a potent layer of protection.12

| Card Name | Primary Role | On-Field Effect Value | "When Banished" Effect Value | Optimal Usage |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Maliss <P> Dormouse | Combo Starter | High (Engine Starter) | High (Combo Enabler) | Normal Summon to banish a "Maliss" monster from the Deck and begin the main combo. |
| Maliss <P> White Rabbit | Combo Starter | High (Trap Setup) | High (Combo Enabler) | Normal Summon to Set a "Maliss" Trap (TB-11 for extension, MTP-07 for disruption). |
| Maliss <P> Chessy Cat | Extender / Draw Engine | Medium (Card Advantage) | High (Combo Enabler) | Use mid-combo to convert an extra "Maliss" card in hand into two new cards. |
| Maliss <P> March Hare | Extender / Recovery | High (Protection/Recursion) | Medium (Resource Recovery) | Special Summon from hand to extend plays without a Normal Summon; use its recovery for follow-up. |

## Section 3: The Network Command - Extra Deck Boss Monsters

The primary objective of the Maliss Link climbing strategy is to summon its three powerful Link-3 boss monsters. These monsters are not merely a collection of individual threats; they are designed with interlocking effects that create a resilient, looping system of advantage. The typical combo pathway flows through these monsters sequentially, with each one setting up the next while providing a unique form of disruption or resource generation.

### 3.1 Maliss White Binder - The Graveyard Controller & Resource Generator

Maliss <Q> White Binder is arguably the most versatile of the Link-3 trio, providing critical graveyard disruption while simultaneously generating resources for future plays.3

* **Role:** A multi-purpose utility monster that controls the opponent's graveyard and searches for key Trap Cards.
* **Effects Analysis:**
  + **On-Special Summon Effect:** Its controller can target and banish up to three cards from any graveyard(s). This is a potent, non-targeting form of disruption that can cripple strategies reliant on their graveyard resources.3
  + **On-field Ignition Effect:** During the Main Phase, its controller can Set one "Maliss" Trap directly from their Deck or Graveyard. This effect provides consistent access to the archetype's powerful trap lineup, either setting up an interruption for the opponent's turn or recovering a trap for reuse.3
  + **"When Banished" Effect:** If White Binder is banished, its controller can pay 900 LP to Special Summon it back to the field and draw one card. This powerful revival effect provides both board presence and immediate card advantage, making its removal a net positive for the Maliss player.3

### 3.2 Maliss Red Ransom - The Spell Searcher & Board Breaker

Maliss <Q> Red Ransom is the key consistency piece among the Link monsters, ensuring access to the all-important Field Spell while also offering a unique, passive form of disruption that can incapacitate certain strategies.

* **Role:** A searcher that guarantees access to Maliss in Underground and a disruptive presence that weakens opposing monsters.
* **Effects Analysis:**
  + **On-Special Summon Effect:** Its controller can add one "Maliss" Spell from their Deck to their hand. This is almost always used to search for Maliss in Underground, which itself is another combo starter.3
  + **On-field Continuous Effect:** While Red Ransom points to a monster, the original ATK and DEF of all Effect Monsters the opponent controls are switched. This can render high-ATK, low-DEF boss monsters vulnerable in battle.3
  + **"When Banished" Effect:** If banished, its controller can pay 900 LP to Special Summon it and then banish one Cyberse monster from their Deck. This can be used to banish a utility monster like Dotscaper for a free Special Summon or another "Maliss" monster to continue combos.3

### 3.3 Maliss Hearts Crypter - The Unstoppable Finisher & Problem Solver

Maliss <Q> Hearts Crypter is the archetype's ultimate boss monster and primary win condition. Requiring three monsters for its Link Summon (including at least one "Maliss" monster), it is a significant investment that pays off with an unparalleled removal effect and game-ending offensive power.3

* **Role:** A non-negatable removal tool and a powerful OTK enabler.
* **Effects Analysis:**
  + **On-field Quick Effect:** Its controller can target one of their banished "Maliss" cards, shuffle it into the Deck, and if they do, banish one card on the field. Crucially, while Hearts Crypter points to a monster, the activation and resolution of this effect cannot be negated.3 This makes it one of the most reliable forms of removal in the game, capable of eliminating otherwise indestructible or negation-proof threats.
  + **"When Banished" Effect:** If banished, its controller can pay 900 LP to Special Summon it, and its ATK is doubled for the turn. This transforms Hearts Crypter into a 5000 ATK behemoth, capable of ending the game with a single attack.3

The design of these Link monsters facilitates a sophisticated resource loop. A common play pattern involves using Red Ransom first to search Maliss in Underground, which extends the combo. This leads into White Binder, which disrupts the opponent's graveyard and sets a trap like Maliss <C> MTP-07. The final piece is Hearts Crypter, which can then use the banished cards as fuel for its removal effect. The loop becomes truly apparent when an opponent attempts to remove one of these monsters. For instance, using a set trap to banish White Binder as a cost is not a loss; it is an activation condition. White Binder will then trigger its own effect, returning to the field and providing a draw, turning the "cost" of one card into the "trigger" for another's advantage. This intricate web of interactions allows the deck to maximize value from every single action.

## Section 4: Subroutines & Viruses - The Spell & Trap Arsenal

The Maliss Spell and Trap lineup provides the critical support structure for the monster-based engine, offering consistency, protection, disruption, and powerful win conditions. The Trap cards, in particular, feature a unique mechanic that sets them apart from conventional support.

### 4.1 The Field Spell: Maliss in Underground

Maliss in Underground is a multi-purpose Field Spell that functions as a combo starter, a late-game powerhouse, and a source of protection, making it a cornerstone of the deck's strategy.

* **Role:** A versatile tool for consistency and closing out games.
* **Effects Analysis:**
  + **On Activation:** Its controller can banish one "Maliss" card from their hand, Deck, or Graveyard. This effect effectively makes the Field Spell a one-card starter, similar to Gold Sarcophagus, by banishing a monster like Dormouse or White Rabbit to trigger its revival effect.10
  + **Continuous Effect 1:** While there are three or more "Maliss" Traps with different names in the banished zone, all "Maliss" Link Monsters on the field gain 3000 ATK. This is a potent, often game-ending effect that can turn the Link monsters into massive threats.10
  + **Continuous Effect 2:** While its controller has a "Maliss" Link Monster, the opponent's monsters can only target "Maliss" Link Monsters for attacks. This protects the weaker Main Deck monsters, which are often needed for their continuous effects or as material for further plays.10

### 4.2 The "Fast" Traps - A Unique Mechanic

A defining feature of the Maliss archetype is its suite of Normal Traps. Each of them shares the text: "You can activate this card the turn it was Set, by banishing 1 face-up 'Maliss' monster you control".3 This clause is transformative, allowing the traps to function as Spell Speed 2 effects on the turn they are set by Maliss <P> White Rabbit or Maliss <Q> White Binder. The act of banishing a monster is not a drawback but a synergistic cost, as it immediately triggers the banished monster's effect to Special Summon itself, effectively turning the trap activation into a "+1" in card advantage and board presence.

### 4.3 Trap Card Breakdown

* **Maliss <C> TB-11:** This is the primary combo-extending trap. Its effect Special Summons one "Maliss" monster from the Deck. When set by White Rabbit on turn one, it is immediately activated by banishing Rabbit, which then summons Dormouse from the Deck while Rabbit revives itself, creating two monsters from one.3
* **Maliss <C> GWC-06:** This is the archetype's main recovery tool. It Special Summons a "Maliss" monster from the Graveyard or the banished zone. It is essential for extending plays in the mid-to-late game or recovering resources after an opponent has cleared the board.3
* **Maliss <C> MTP-07:** This trap is both a searcher and a powerful piece of disruption. It allows its controller to add one "Maliss" monster from their Deck to their hand. Additionally, if they control a "Maliss" Link Monster, they can also banish one card on the field. This dual effect makes it an ideal card to set for the opponent's turn, providing both interaction and a follow-up play.12

### 4.4 Other Spells: Maliss in the Mirror

Maliss in the Mirror is a Quick-Play Spell that adds another layer of interaction to the deck. Its primary effect allows the player to target an opponent's face-up monster, banish a "Maliss" monster from their hand or field, and negate the targeted monster's effects until the end of the turn.7 Like the other cards in the archetype, it has a secondary effect when it is banished, allowing its controller to search for another "Maliss" card, further fueling the resource loop.

| Card Name | Card Type | Primary Function | Optimal Activation Window |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Maliss in Underground | Field Spell | Combo Starter / Win Condition | Your Turn (Main Phase 1) |
| Maliss <C> TB-11 | Normal Trap | Combo Extender | Your Turn (Main Phase 1) |
| Maliss <C> GWC-06 | Normal Trap | Recovery / Extender | Your Turn or Opponent's Turn |
| Maliss <C> MTP-07 | Normal Trap | Disruption / Searcher | Opponent's Turn (Any Phase) |
| Maliss in the Mirror | Quick-Play Spell | Disruption / Negation | Opponent's Turn (Any Phase) |

## Section 5: Execution Pathways - Core Combo Lines & Search Dynamics

Mastering the Maliss archetype requires an understanding that its combo lines are not rigid, linear sequences but rather a series of modular steps that can be adapted based on the starting hand and potential disruptions. The fundamental goal of any opening play is to establish at least two "Maliss" monsters on the field. Once this state is achieved, the subsequent Link climbing procedure is relatively standard.

### 5.1 The One-Card Dormouse Full Combo

This is the deck's most efficient and common opening play.37

1. Normal Summon Maliss <P> Dormouse.
2. Activate the effect of Dormouse, banishing Maliss <P> White Rabbit from the Deck.
3. The "When Banished" effect of White Rabbit triggers. Pay 300 LP to Special Summon it.
4. Link Summon Haggard Lizardose using Dormouse and White Rabbit as material.
5. Activate the effect of Haggard Lizardose, banishing Dormouse from the Graveyard to Special Summon a Cyberse Token.
6. The "When Banished" effect of Dormouse triggers. Pay 300 LP to Special Summon it.
7. Link Summon Maliss <Q> Red Ransom using Haggard Lizardose and the Token.
8. The on-summon effect of Red Ransom activates, adding Maliss in Underground from the Deck to the hand.
9. Activate Maliss in Underground, using its effect to banish Maliss <P> Chessy Cat from the Deck.
10. The "When Banished" effect of Chessy Cat triggers. Pay 300 LP to Special Summon it.
11. From here, the player can continue to Link climb using Red Ransom, Dormouse, and Chessy Cat to end on a board typically featuring Maliss <Q> Hearts Crypter, Maliss <Q> White Binder (which sets a trap like MTP-07), and other generic Link monsters.14

### 5.2 The One-Card White Rabbit Full Combo

This line achieves a similar end state but proceeds through the archetype's Trap cards.37

1. Normal Summon Maliss <P> White Rabbit.
2. Activate the on-summon effect of White Rabbit, Setting Maliss <C> TB-11 from the Deck.
3. Activate Maliss <C> TB-11. To meet its activation condition for this turn, banish the face-up White Rabbit.
4. TB-11 resolves, Special Summoning Maliss <P> Dormouse from the Deck.
5. The "When Banished" effect of White Rabbit triggers. Pay 300 LP to Special Summon it.
6. The field now contains Dormouse and White Rabbit, the same state achieved in step 3 of the Dormouse combo. The player can now proceed with the standard Link climbing sequence.

### 5.3 Non-Standard Starter Combos (Underground / Gold Sarcophagus)

The deck's consistency is bolstered by its ability to start combos without a Normal Summoned monster.37

* **Maliss in Underground / Gold Sarcophagus:** Activating either of these Spells to banish a starter like Dormouse or Rabbit from the Deck will trigger its revival effect, Special Summoning it to the field. This single monster can then be used to Link Summon a Link-1 monster (like Linguriboh), which then places the starter in the Graveyard, allowing it to be banished again by another card effect to trigger its revival a second time. While this provides resilience against effects that negate Normal Summons, it comes with a strategic trade-off. These lines use the monster's "revive-from-banish" effect immediately, making the combo more fragile. A single interruption, such as Ghost Ogre & Snow Rabbit destroying the revived monster, can halt the entire sequence, as that monster cannot revive itself again that turn.39

### 5.4 Search & Recursion Flowchart

The internal synergy of the archetype is defined by a web of search and recovery effects that ensure resources are always available.

* **Trap Searching:**
  + Maliss <P> White Rabbit (On-Summon) -> Sets any "Maliss" Trap from Deck.
  + Maliss <Q> White Binder (On-Field) -> Sets any "Maliss" Trap from Deck or GY.
* **Spell Searching:**
  + Maliss <Q> Red Ransom (On-Summon) -> Adds any "Maliss" Spell from Deck to hand.
* **Monster Searching/Access:**
  + Maliss <C> MTP-07 (Trap Effect) -> Adds any "Maliss" Monster from Deck to hand.
  + Maliss <P> Dormouse (On-Field) -> Banishes any "Maliss" Monster from Deck (indirect search).
  + Maliss in Underground (On-Activation) -> Banishes any "Maliss" Monster from Deck (indirect search).
* **Recursion/Recovery:**
  + Maliss <C> GWC-06 (Trap Effect) -> Special Summons a "Maliss" Monster from GY or Banish.
  + Maliss <P> March Hare ("When Banished") -> Adds a banished "Maliss" Monster to hand.

## Section 6: The Final Configuration - Constructing and Piloting the Endboard

The culmination of the Maliss combo is a formidable endboard designed to systematically dismantle the opponent's plays through multiple layers of interaction. Understanding the composition of this board and the optimal sequencing of its interruptions is paramount to successfully piloting the deck.

### 6.1 Anatomy of the Optimal Endboard

A typical turn-one Maliss board, generated from a single starter card, consists of several key components that work in concert 14:

* **Maliss <Q> Hearts Crypter:** Positioned with an arrow pointing to another monster, this provides the un-negatable Quick Effect to banish any card on the field. This is the board's primary answer to powerful, otherwise problematic boss monsters.
* **Maliss <Q> White Binder:** This monster provides two forms of interaction. Its on-summon effect will have already banished key cards from the opponent's Graveyard. It also serves as a body on the field that, if removed, will revive itself and generate a draw.
* **Set Maliss <C> MTP-07:** Typically set by the effect of White Binder during the combo. On the opponent's turn, this trap can be activated to search for a follow-up "Maliss" monster while also banishing another card on the field, providing a second targeted removal.
* **Generic Link Boss Monster:** The board is often rounded out with a powerful generic Link Monster. Firewall Dragon is a common choice for its ability to bounce an opponent's monster back to the hand. S:P Little Knight is another prime candidate for its non-targeting banish effect.13
* **Resource Replenishment:** The endboard is not static. Through the course of the opponent's turn, it generates new resources. Activating MTP-07 searches a monster. If White Binder is removed and revives itself, it provides a draw. This ensures the Maliss player has ample resources for their next turn.14

### 6.2 Piloting the Board - Sequencing Interruptions

Effectively using this board requires careful timing and threat assessment. The interruptions should not be used indiscriminately but rather held to disrupt the most critical points of an opponent's strategy.

* **White Binder's GY Banish:** Although this effect is used during the initial combo, a savvy player can summon White Binder during the opponent's turn via Maliss <C> GWC-06. In this scenario, it is often best to activate its effect during the opponent's Draw or Standby Phase to banish key combo pieces from their Graveyard before they have a chance to use them.
* **Maliss <C> MTP-07:** This is often the first point of interaction used. It can be chained to the summon of a key opponent's monster to banish it before it can activate its effect. The search effect simultaneously prepares a follow-up play.
* **Firewall Dragon / S:P Little Knight:** These generic removal options are best used on monsters that are immune to destruction or targeting, or to remove a key combo piece that MTP-07 cannot address.
* **Maliss <Q> Hearts Crypter:** The un-negatable banish from Hearts Crypter is the board's ultimate trump card. This should be reserved for the opponent's most powerful monster—the one that their entire strategy relies upon or that cannot be outed by other means. Using it too early on a lesser threat can leave the board vulnerable to a stronger follow-up.

## Section 7: System Integration - Archetypal Synergies & Hybrid Builds

The Maliss engine's compact size, DARK attribute, and Cyberse typing make it exceptionally flexible and capable of integrating with a variety of other archetypes and support packages. These hybrid builds leverage the Maliss core to generate bodies and interruptions while using the secondary engine to provide additional layers of power, consistency, or disruption.

### 7.1 Sky Striker Maliss

This variant combines the recursive Link climbing of Maliss with the powerful board-breaking and resource-generating spells of the Sky Striker engine.3

* **Synergy:** The Maliss one-card starters can establish a board presence while leaving the Main Monster Zones free, a critical requirement for activating Sky Striker Spells. Going second, cards like Sky Striker Mobilize - Engage! and Sky Striker Mecha - Widow Anchor can be used to dismantle an opponent's board before committing to the Maliss combo, making the deck more potent when forced to play second.

### 7.2 Kashtira Maliss

This build incorporates a small package of Kashtira monsters to provide free Special Summons that enhance the deck's board presence and disruptive capabilities.40

* **Synergy:** Kashtira Fenrir is a free Level 7 body that can search for itself and provides a face-down banish. Since it does not require a Normal Summon, it can be summoned alongside the main Maliss combo. Kashtira Birth provides an additional Normal Summon and can revive Kashtira monsters, generating a steady stream of advantage that can overwhelm opponents.40 This variant is noted for its strong performance against a wide range of decks due to the raw power of the Kashtira cards.

### 7.3 Bystial Maliss

This is a natural and powerful pairing, as all Maliss monsters are DARK, making them immune to the summoning condition of the Bystial monsters.13

* **Synergy:** Bystial monsters like Bystial Magnamhut and Bystial Druiswurm can be Special Summoned from the hand by banishing a LIGHT or DARK monster from either Graveyard. This provides free bodies for Link Summons while simultaneously disrupting the opponent's Graveyard. A full Bystial engine, including The Bystial Lubellion and Branded Regained, can create a powerful draw engine that synergizes with the Maliss strategy of constant banishing.40

### 7.4 Generic Cyberse Support

Beyond specific archetypal pairings, Maliss benefits immensely from the vast pool of generic Cyberse support cards.13

* **Key Cards:**
  + Dotscaper: A Level 1 Cyberse monster that Special Summons itself from the Graveyard or when banished, providing a free material for Link Summons. It is a prime target to banish with the effect of Maliss <Q> Red Ransom.13
  + Splash Mage and Transcode Talker: These Link monsters are staples in Cyberse strategies. Splash Mage can revive a Cyberse monster from the Graveyard, and Transcode Talker can revive another Link monster, enabling easy access to high-Link-rating monsters.
  + Accesscode Talker: The premier finisher for Cyberse decks. By using Transcode Talker and other Link monsters, a Maliss player can easily summon Accesscode Talker with over 5000 ATK and multiple destruction effects to end the game.

## Section 8: Vulnerabilities & Counter-Protocols - Choke Points and Side Decking

Despite its power and resilience, the Maliss archetype has several well-defined vulnerabilities. A competitive player must not only understand their own deck's strengths but also be acutely aware of its weaknesses and the specific "choke points" that opponents will target.

### 8.1 Identifying Critical Choke Points

The Maliss strategy, while complex, hinges on a few key mechanics that, if successfully disrupted, can cause the entire combo to collapse.

* **Banishment Prevention:** The single most effective counter to the Maliss strategy is to prevent cards from being banished. Cards like Artifact Lancea, which for a turn prevents either player from banishing cards, or an opposing Dimension Shifter, which banishes any card sent to the GY, are devastating. Lancea completely shuts off the "When Banished" revival effects of all Maliss monsters, halting the combo in its tracks.3
* **The Normal Summon:** While the deck has starters that do not rely on the Normal Summon, its most potent one-card combos do. A well-timed hand trap like Infinite Impermanence or Effect Veiler targeting the initial Dormouse or White Rabbit can often be enough to end the turn, especially if the Maliss player does not have an extender like March Hare.39
* **Mass Board Removal:** The core combo summons a large number of monsters in a single turn. This makes the deck highly susceptible to Nibiru, the Primal Being. While there are combo lines that can play around Nibiru by setting up a monster negate before the fifth summon, the standard lines are vulnerable.37

### 8.2 Strategic Side Decking

A well-constructed Side Deck is crucial for addressing these vulnerabilities and adapting to different matchups.

* **Going First:** When expecting to go first in games two and three, the Side Deck should focus on cards that protect the established board from being broken. This includes powerful Counter Traps like Solemn Judgment or floodgate cards like Dimensional Barrier (naming Link or Fusion, depending on the matchup) to proactively shut down the opponent's strategy.3
* **Going Second:** When anticipating going second, the focus shifts to high-impact board-breaking cards. Triple Tactics Thrust is exceptional, as it can search for any Normal Spell or Trap after an opponent activates a monster effect, allowing access to cards like Triple Tactics Talent, Change of Heart, or even a Kaiju. Mass removal spells like Lightning Storm and Harpie's Feather Duster are also essential for clearing established boards.3
* **Specific Matchup Tech:** For the mirror match, Artifact Lancea is the most powerful card available.3 Cards like Different Dimension Ground, which forces all monsters to be sent to the Graveyard instead of being banished, serve a similar purpose.

| Opponent's Card | Threat Level | How it Hurts Maliss | Counter-Play / Mitigation Strategy |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Artifact Lancea | Critical | Prevents all "When Banished" monster effects and the activation of "Fast" Traps, shutting down the entire engine for a turn. | Attempt to build a board using only on-field effects; prioritize setting MTP-07 for disruption. Side in Counter Traps (Solemn Judgment) or backrow removal (Harpie's Feather Duster). |
| Dimension Shifter | High | Prevents monsters from hitting the Graveyard, which can disrupt certain Link climbing lines involving GY revival (e.g., Splash Mage). | The core Maliss engine is less affected than other decks, but it limits combo flexibility. Prioritize lines that do not require GY setup. |
| Nibiru, the Primal Being | High | Tributes the entire board after the fifth summon, replacing it with a single token. | Learn and practice "Nibiru-proof" combos that establish a monster negate (e.g., via Baronne de Fleur in certain builds) before the fifth summon. |
| Infinite Impermanence / Effect Veiler | Medium-High | Negates the effect of the Normal Summoned starter (Dormouse or White Rabbit), potentially ending the turn without an extender. | Open with multiple starters or extenders (March Hare, Underground). Use Chessy Cat's draw effect to bait the negation early. Side in Called by the Grave. |

## Section 9: Conclusion - The Maliss Metagame Position

The Maliss archetype stands as a premier example of modern card design, showcasing a high degree of internal synergy, resilience, and a commanding competitive ceiling. Its unique gameplay loop, which transforms the banished zone from a point of no return into an active resource pool, allows it to generate immense advantage from minimal investment. The consistency afforded by multiple one-card starters, combined with the explosive potential of its Link climbing sequences, solidifies its position as a top-tier strategy in the metagame.5 The deck's ability to construct a multi-layered board of interruptions makes it one of the most powerful strategies when going first.

However, this power is balanced by a set of clear and defined weaknesses. The deck's profound reliance on the banishing mechanic makes it acutely vulnerable to specific floodgate effects, most notably Artifact Lancea, which can single-handedly stop its core engine for a critical turn. This creates a dynamic metagame environment where the success of Maliss is often tied to the prevalence of its direct counters.

Ultimately, the success of a Maliss player is contingent on their depth of knowledge. Rote memorization of a single combo sequence is insufficient for navigating the complexities of a competitive match. True mastery requires a nuanced understanding of the deck's modular combo pieces, the ability to adapt to interruptions, and the foresight to pilot its powerful endboard with precision. The archetype's flexibility, demonstrated by its successful integration with engines like Sky Striker, Kashtira, and Bystial, ensures its continued relevance and adaptability. Maliss is not merely a powerful deck; it is a complex strategic puzzle that rewards skillful play and deep system knowledge, cementing its place as a pillar of the competitive landscape.

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