# The Deep Tide Strategy: Mermail Atlantean Mechanics, Chain Theory, and Optimal TCG Endboards

The Atlantean archetype, historically inseparable from the Mermail engine in the TCG, functions as a high-velocity combo strategy centered on resource generation and controlled discard loops. Unlike many contemporary archetypes, the consistency and resilience of Mermail Atlantean are fundamentally tied to strict adherence to Problem-Solving Card Text (PSCT) rules, chain link theory, and the ability to convert mandatory trigger effects into guaranteed searches and disruptions. The deck's primary competitive goal is to rapidly fill the Graveyard (GY) to summon *Moulinglacia the Elemental Lord*, stripping the opponent’s hand before establishing a comprehensive control board anchored by powerful Extra Deck monsters.

## I. The Foundation of Depth: Core Mechanics and PSCT Mandates

The competitive viability of the Atlantean monsters—*Dragoons*, *Heavy Infantry*, and *Marksman*—derives entirely from a nuanced interpretation of their trigger condition: they must be sent to the GY **to activate a WATER monster's effect**.1 This specificity requires a detailed understanding of how costs are paid in the Yu-Gi-Oh! card game.

### A. The Crucial Semicolon: Distinguishing Costs, Conditions, and Activated Effects

The Atlantean trigger effect is not satisfied by simply discarding or sending a card to the GY; the action must serve as the payment of a cost for an activated effect. In modern PSCT, this distinction is codified by the semicolon (;). Any action written before the semicolon signifies a cost paid to activate the effect.2 For instance, a monster effect that reads, "You can discard 1 card; Special Summon this card..." satisfies the condition because discarding is the cost preceding the semicolon.1

This ruling fundamentally structures the deck, creating a structural constraint that dictates the inclusion of specific companion archetypes. Cards such as *Swap Frog* may require discarding a WATER monster, but if that action facilitates an Inherent Special Summon, which does not start a Chain, the Atlantean monster’s trigger condition is not met.2 This is because the cost must initiate an activated effect that starts a chain, affirming that the Mermail archetype is not merely a thematic choice but a mechanical necessity, as their key monsters provide the activated discarding effects required to unlock the Atlantean engine.3

### B. The Atlantean Trigger Principle: Mandatory Effects and Chain Blocking

A critical element of the Atlantean design is the mandatory nature of their trigger effects (e.g., "If this card is sent to the GY..."). This mandatory clause is not a weakness; it is the core strategic defense mechanism used for chain blocking against common hand traps.

When an Atlantean monster is discarded as cost for a WATER monster’s optional effect, the resulting chain is built according to SEGOC (Simultaneous Effects Go On Chain) rules. The mandatory effect of the Atlantean monster must be placed at the lowest possible Chain Link (CL1), followed by the optional effect of the activation vehicle (CL2 or higher).4 This allows the duelist to intentionally protect the most vital search effect, typically that of

*Atlantean Dragoons*. If the opponent attempts to negate the chain with a single card like *Ash Blossom & Joyous Spring*, they must target the highest chain link (CL2), leaving the mandatory CL1 effect of *Dragoons* to resolve successfully, guaranteeing resource acquisition.4

### C. Essential Atlantean Personnel: Roles and Search Maps

The core Atlantean members fulfill specific roles that facilitate resource management, board presence, and disruption. The archetype’s strength lies in the conversion of a discard cost into a net positive resource return.

Table: Essential Atlantean Personnel: Roles and Search Maps

| **Atlantean Card** | **Lvl/Type** | **Trigger Condition** | **Mandatory Effect (Result)** | **Strategic Function/Key Targets** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Atlantean Dragoons | L4/Sea Serpent | Sent to GY for WATER effect cost. | Add 1 Sea Serpent monster from Deck. | Primary Searcher, essential for finding *Moulinglacia the Elemental Lord* and key Mermails/Atlanteans. 5 |
| Atlantean Heavy Infantry | L2/Sea Serpent | Sent to GY for WATER effect cost. | Destroy 1 face-up card opponent controls (Target). | Proactive disruption; used in Quick Effect plays via *Abyssrhine*. Grants an extra Normal Summon for Level 4 or lower Sea Serpent. 3 |
| Atlantean Marksman | L3/Sea Serpent | Sent to GY for WATER effect cost. | Destroy 1 Set card opponent controls (Target). | Backrow control. Can also Special Summon Level 4 or lower Atlanteans upon inflicting battle damage. 9 |
| Neptabyss, the Atlantean Prince | L1/Sea Serpent/Tuner | Send 1 Atlantean (Deck to GY) as cost. Also SS trigger. | Search 1 Atlantean card (Ignition) or SS 1 Atlantean from GY (Trigger). | Primary combo starter, Tuner, and vital recursion tool. 3 |

*Neptabyss, the Atlantean Prince* is paramount, as its activation involves sending one Atlantean monster from the Deck to the GY as cost to search an Atlantean card.11 When

*Neptabyss* sends *Dragoons* from the Deck, two searches are immediately generated: *Dragoons*' mandatory effect searches any Sea Serpent (often *Moulinglacia*), while *Neptabyss*' effect searches another Atlantean (often *Heavy Infantry*).3 Furthermore, if

*Neptabyss* itself is sent to the GY to activate a WATER monster's effect, it triggers to Special Summon an Atlantean monster from the GY, facilitating crucial extension and recovery.11

## II. External Engine Integration: Mermail and Deep Sea Synergy

The core Atlantean mechanic is amplified by external support that provides the necessary discard vehicles, consistency tools, and proactive disruption, chiefly from the Mermail and Deep Sea archetypes.

### A. Mermail Discard Outlets: The Engine’s Velocity

Mermail monsters are the primary activation engines for Atlanteans due to their inherent Special Summon conditions that mandate discarding WATER monsters as cost. *Mermail Abyssteus* (Level 7) requires discarding 1 WATER monster to Special Summon itself and search a Level 4 or lower Mermail, making it a highly efficient way to access *Abysspike* or *Abyssgunde* while triggering one Atlantean.3

*Mermail Abyssmegalo* (Level 7) requires discarding 2 WATER monsters to Special Summon and search an "Abyss-" Spell/Trap, typically using one *Dragoons* and one other Atlantean to generate a massive resource swing of +3 or more immediately.3 The capacity of these cards to convert resources held in the hand into field presence and multiple searches is what gives the Mermail Atlantean strategy its explosive power.

### B. Deep Sea Consistency and Proactive Disruption

Recent TCG support, particularly in the Deep Sea and related themes, has modernized the deck's approach to disruption and consistency. *Deep Sea Diva* (Level 2 Tuner) is renowned as the deck's definitive 1-card starter, summoning *Neptabyss, the Atlantean Prince* directly from the Deck upon Normal Summon, immediately initiating the full combo loop.13

*Deep Sea Minstrel* (Level 3) is paramount for the deck's signature hand-ripping strategy. When activated, it requires discarding 1 WATER monster as cost to look at the opponent's hand and banish one card until the End Phase.15 By discarding an Atlantean, the search engine starts, and the duelist gains crucial knowledge of the opponent's defenses, allowing them to proactively remove critical hand traps such as

*Nibiru, the Primal Being* or *Maxx "C"* before committing to the full combo line.16

Furthermore, the newest inclusion, *Abyssrhine, the Atlantean Spirit*, offers flexible interruption.17 In the GY,

*Abyssrhine* possesses a Quick Effect during the opponent's turn: banish itself and discard 1 card (cost) to draw 1.17 This effect is tactically utilized to discard

*Atlantean Heavy Infantry* on the opponent’s turn. The discarded *Heavy Infantry* then triggers, destroying one face-up card the opponent controls.7 This sophisticated maneuver converts a simple GY utility effect into a powerful, non-destruction removal option that activates outside of the Battle Phase, significantly bolstering the deck's defensive capability against established boards.

### C. The Hand Loop Enabler: Moulinglacia the Elemental Lord

The overarching strategic objective of the Mermail Atlantean engine is the guaranteed summon of *Moulinglacia the Elemental Lord*.16 This Level 8 monster can be Special Summoned from the hand if the duelist controls no monsters, provided there are exactly five WATER monsters in the GY.16 Because the entire engine revolves around cycling Atlanteans through cost activations, achieving the 5-WATER count is often trivial within the first few steps of the combo.12

Upon its Special Summon, *Moulinglacia* forces the opponent to discard two random cards from their hand.12 Combined with the targeted banish performed earlier by

*Deep Sea Minstrel*, this sequence results in a total Hand Rip of 2 to 3 cards before the opponent's first Draw Phase, confirming the deck's transition from an aggressive OTK focus to a formidable preemptive control strategy centered on massive resource denial.18

## III. Optimized Combo Algorithms: Step-by-Step Execution

Mermail Atlantean combo lines are highly modular, designed to chain together resource generation and field deployment linearly. The most reliable competitive sequence relies on the Deep Sea Diva 1-card starter to access *Moulinglacia* while simultaneously building a protective board.

### A. The Critical One-Card Starter: Deep Sea Diva (The Primary Hand Loop Line)

The following sequence, often initiated by a single *Deep Sea Diva*, illustrates the density of searches and summons achieved, culminating in the Hand Rip and a robust endboard.

Table: AI Canvas Mapping Trace: Deep Sea Diva One-Card Starter (to Hand Rip)

| **Step #** | **Action (Diva Combo Line)** | **Cost/Vehicle Used** | **CL1 (Mandatory Trigger)** | **CL2 (Optional Effect)** | **Resource/Field Result** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Normal Summon *Deep Sea Diva* (L2) | N/A | N/A | Diva SS Effect | SS *Neptabyss, the Atlantean Prince* (L1) from Deck. |
| 2 | Activate *Neptabyss* (Field) | Send *Atlantean Dragoons* (Deck to GY, Cost) | Dragoons (GY) Search | Neptabyss Search | Dragoons searches *Deep Sea Minstrel* (L3). Neptabyss searches *Atlantean Heavy Infantry* (L2). |
| 3 | Synchro Summon *Tatsunoko* (L3) | Diva (L2) + Neptabyss (L1) | Neptabyss (GY) SS | N/A | Neptabyss SS *Atlantean Dragoons* (L4). Tatsunoko (L3) on Field. |
| 4 | Utilize *Heavy Infantry* Extra NS | N/A | N/A | N/A | Normal Summon *Deep Sea Minstrel* (L3) (Hand). |
| 5 | Activate *Minstrel* (Field) | Discard *Atlantean Heavy Infantry* (Hand to GY, Cost) | Heavy Infantry (GY) Pop | Minstrel Hand Banish | Infantry destroys 1 face-up card. Opponent's critical card banished. GY Count: 5. |
| 6 | Special Summon *Moulinglacia* (L8) | N/A | N/A | Moulinglacia Effect | SS Moulinglacia. Opponent discards 2 cards (Hand Rip -2). |

Following step 6, the duelist typically converts the monsters on the field (Minstrel L3, Dragoons L4, Tatsunoko L3, Moulinglacia L8) into the final Extra Deck disruption pieces, leveraging their various levels and types. For instance, Tatsunoko and Dragoons can be Synchro Summoned into *Adamancipator Risen - Dragite* (L7), while Minstrel and Moulinglacia can be used for other Synchro or Xyz plays, such as *Number 38: Hope Harbinger Dragon Titanic Galaxy* (L8 Xyz) or *Abyss Dweller* (L4 Xyz) using other recovered materials.12

The flow of resources relies on the successful resolution of the *Neptabyss* activation. The entire combo is reliant on this point of execution, meaning that dedicated protection methods must be employed to ensure it is not interrupted.

### B. Advanced Combo Variations: Chain Blocking for Resilience

The execution of cost payment must prioritize the mandatory nature of the Atlantean effects to shield vital searches from disruption.4 For example, when initiating a combo with

*Mermail Abyssteus* and *Atlantean Dragoons*: *Abyssteus* is activated by discarding *Dragoons* as cost. When building the chain, the mandatory trigger of *Dragoons* (search) is assigned CL1, while the optional effect of *Abyssteus* (search/SS) is assigned CL2.4

This sequencing ensures that if the opponent uses a single negation effect, such as *Ghost Ogre & Snow Rabbit* or *Ash Blossom*, they can only target the highest link (CL2, *Abyssteus*' effect). The most critical card acquisition, the *Dragoons* search for *Moulinglacia* or *Neptabyss*, then resolves at CL1, mitigating the impact of the opponent's disruption.4 This systematic reliance on mandatory effects to secure resources demonstrates a mastery of game mechanics rather than simple brute force combo execution. Furthermore, even if the primary effect of the activation vehicle (e.g.,

*Mermail Abyssmegalo*) is negated or the monster removed by effects like *Bottomless Trap Hole*, the cost has already been paid, and the mandatory Atlantean effects still trigger and resolve in a subsequent chain.2

## IV. Establishing Dominance: Endboards, Disruption, and Matchup Analysis

The modern Mermail Atlantean endboard is constructed for high durability and preemptive control, focusing on non-destruction removal, negation, and resource denial (the Hand Rip).

### A. The Standard Competitive Endboard Components

A fully realized Turn 1 endboard typically features three primary forms of interruption, plus resource denial:

1. **Hand Advantage Control (Hand Rip):** Achieved through the synergy of *Deep Sea Minstrel* (targeted banish) and *Moulinglacia the Elemental Lord* (random -2 discard), often resulting in the opponent starting their turn with only 3 cards.16
2. **Graveyard Floodgate:** *Abyss Dweller* (Rank 4 Xyz).16 This monster's effect prevents the opponent from activating monster effects in the GY, a critical disruption point against many top-tier recursive strategies, such as those relying on Shuffling or GY triggers.
3. **Omni-Protection and Mass Banish:** *Icejade Gymir Aegirine* (Level 10 Synchro).21 This powerful Synchro provides a Quick Effect that protects all WATER monsters the duelist controls from destruction or banishment by opponent's card effects. If activated in response to an opponent’s card, it banishes all cards with that name from the field and GY, serving as a powerful, non-targeting form of removal and punishing highly redundant strategies.21
4. **Flexible Negation:** Often utilizing Level 7 or 8 Synchro/Xyz monsters like *Adamancipator Risen - Dragite* (S/T or Monster Effect negate) or *Number 38: Hope Harbinger Dragon Titanic Galaxy* (S/T negate).12

### B. Strategic Utility of Endboard Choices

The selection of these Extra Deck monsters is deliberate, aiming for layered defensive redundancy. *Icejade Gymir Aegirine*'s presence is crucial because its protection shields other key control pieces, most importantly *Abyss Dweller*, from targeted or mass removal effects.21 By securing the GY lockout, the duelist guarantees that the momentum gained from the initial Hand Rip is maintained throughout the subsequent turn.

Furthermore, the continuous utility of *Abyssrhine, the Atlantean Spirit* in the GY converts the post-combo resource cost payment into live interruption. The Quick Effect banish and discard enables the *Heavy Infantry* pop on the opponent’s turn, essentially providing a free piece of non-destruction spot removal when the opponent attempts to establish their field.18 This capability elevates the deck beyond static negation into dynamic, responsive interruption.

### C. Meta Interaction and Matchup Notes

The deck's reliance on high search volume means it is inherently vulnerable to specific preemptive hand traps. The largest threats are *Maxx "C"* (which generates overwhelming card advantage for the opponent) and *Droll & Lock Bird* (which immediately halts all future search lines).16 This vulnerability explains the strategic priority of using

*Deep Sea Minstrel* early in the combo to banish these hand traps, ensuring the combo can proceed safely.

Conversely, the deck performs exceptionally well against strategies that rely on GY recursion, such as modern combo decks. The combination of the Hand Rip and the Turn 1 *Abyss Dweller* essentially neuters any archetype that needs its monsters in the GY to activate effects, confirming the strategy's pivot from a glass-cannon offensive to a resilient control machine.16

## V. Guide for AI Canvas Visualization (Technical Mapping Structure)

To effectively visualize the intricate, chained interactions of the Mermail Atlantean archetype using a tool like the Gemini AI Canvas, the combo flow must be segmented into technical, verifiable steps that clearly map resource movement and chain activation mechanics.

### A. Structure for Tracing Costs and Effects

The visualization must strictly delineate between costs, effects, and the resulting chain resolution. The recommended mapping structure involves creating defined Nodes for each function:

1. **Input Node:** Identifies the starting card(s) (e.g., *Deep Sea Diva*).
2. **Action Node:** Specifies the operation (e.g., Normal Summon, Activate Ignition Effect).
3. **Cost Node (C):** Tracks the payment required for the activation. This node is critical for visualizing the moment the Atlantean trigger condition is met.
4. **Chain Module (CL):** A separate module that displays the mandatory (CL1) and optional (CL2+) effects that activate simultaneously, explicitly demonstrating the strategic layering necessary for chain blocking.
5. **Search/Summon Node (R):** The immediate result of the effect resolving, noting the specific card added to the Hand or Special Summoned to the Field.
6. **State Check Node:** A snapshot documenting the current status of key metrics, such as the count of WATER monsters in the GY (vital for *Moulinglacia* activation).
7. **Output Node:** The final Synchro, Xyz, or Link Monster created from the resources.

### B. Example Mapping Trace

Using the crucial step of *Neptabyss, the Atlantean Prince* activation, the following mapping template illustrates how the technical constraints governing the Atlantean engine are clearly visualized, allowing the user to precisely understand the resource conversion.

Table: AI Canvas Mapping Template: Neptabyss Activation

| **Module Type** | **Component** | **Details for Canvas Map** | **Resource Shift** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action Node** | Neptabyss Activation | Ignition Effect on Field (Starts Chain). | Field: Neptabyss remains. |
| **Cost Node (C)** | Deck Send Cost | Send *Atlantean Dragoons* from Deck to GY. | GY: Dragoons (+1 WATER). |
| **Chain Module (CL)** | SEGOC Activation | **CL1:** Dragoons (Mandatory Search) + **CL2:** Neptabyss (Optional Search) | Opponent must negate CL2 to stop the Neptabyss search, leaving CL1 (Dragoons) to resolve. |
| **Search Node (R)** | Chain Resolution | Dragoons searches Sea Serpent (e.g., *Moulinglacia*). Neptabyss searches Atlantean (e.g., *Heavy Infantry*). | Hand: +2 Cards. |

This detailed, modular approach ensures that the complexities of mandatory trigger effects and cost payment rules are not overlooked, making the underlying engine logic transparent and allowing for accurate scenario analysis within the visualization environment.

## VI. Conclusion

The modern Mermail Atlantean archetype in the TCG is a sophisticated control combo deck defined by its mechanical reliance on precise PSCT rulings and strategic chain building. The deck’s operational efficiency stems from its ability to convert the cost of discarding WATER monsters—required by Mermail and Deep Sea engines—into mandatory trigger effects via the Atlanteans, guaranteeing resource generation even in the face of targeted disruption.

The strategic development of the deck has transitioned its focus from a vulnerable OTK strategy to a highly durable, preemptive control deck. This is evidenced by the consistent execution of the Hand Rip (via *Deep Sea Minstrel* and *Moulinglacia the Elemental Lord*) and the establishment of a layered endboard featuring *Abyss Dweller* (GY lock) and *Icejade Gymir Aegirine* (board protection and mass banish).16 The integration of newer support like

*Abyssrhine, the Atlantean Spirit* further enhances this control by introducing quick-effect disruption that utilizes *Atlantean Heavy Infantry* on the opponent's turn.18 Mastery of this archetype requires a deep understanding of card mechanics, particularly the difference between mandatory and optional effects, to correctly structure defensive chains and optimize the flow of resource conversion.

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