# The Red Dragon Archfiend Resonator Architecture: A Technical Analysis of TCG Combo Dynamics

## I. The Archfiend Archetype: Deconstruction and Duality

### A. Historical Overview: The Legacy Fiend Core (Chess Archfiends)

The nomenclature "Archfiend" constitutes one of the most venerable archetype designations in the Yu-Gi-Oh! Trading Card Game (TCG), encompassing an extensive catalog of 127 cards across multiple product generations.1 Historically, this theme was characterized by high-Level Fiend-Type monsters that imposed a mandatory Life Point (LP) payment cost during the Standby Phase. This detrimental mechanic necessitated the introduction of supporting infrastructure, primarily the Field Spell Card,

*Pandemonium*.2

*Pandemonium* serves two critical functions for the legacy strategy: first, it exempts players from paying the mandatory LP costs associated with "Archfiend" monsters.2 Second, and more importantly for early combo potential, it establishes a slow, reactive resource loop. When an "Archfiend" monster is destroyed and sent to the Graveyard (GY), excluding destruction by battle, the card's owner may add one "Archfiend" monster from the Deck to the hand, provided the target monster possesses a lower Level than the destroyed card.3 This destruction-based resource generation was foundational to the original archetype's economy.4

A key searchable component from the legacy era is *Archfiend Heiress*, a Level 3 Fiend/Effect Monster. If *Archfiend Heiress* is sent to the GY due to a card effect or is destroyed by battle, it triggers a search, allowing the player to add any "Archfiend" card (monster, Spell, or Trap) from the Deck to the hand, excluding copies of itself.5

The reliance of the legacy "Chess Archfiend" strategy on reactive destruction loops and Level-restricted searching, dictated by the effects of *Pandemonium* and the need to capitalize on effects like *Supply Squad* 4, renders the core strategy functionally obsolete in the context of the contemporary TCG meta. Modern gameplay demands proactive combo execution and non-destruction removal, making the older engine too slow to maintain parity. Consequently, the value of legacy support, such as

*Archfiend Heiress*, is now derived solely from its ability to provide generic searching utility that can be integrated into a much faster Synchro shell.

### B. Modern Dominance: Red Dragon Archfiend (RDA) and the Resonator Engine

Despite the structural obsolescence of the original "Archfiend" theme, the modern competitive interpretation is dominated entirely by the **Red Dragon Archfiend** (RDA) strategy.7 This distinct subtype, driven by the

**Resonator** archetype, is characterized as a "Combo deck" that requires high synergy, complex execution relying on 2+ card combinations, and frequent Special Summons to achieve its end goals.9

The competitive success of the theme is overwhelmingly dependent on the efficiency of the *Resonator* archetype, which functions as the primary engine.10 The Resonator monsters—such as

*Crimson Resonator*, *Vision Resonator*, and *Soul Resonator*—are designed to specifically mention and enable the *Red Dragon Archfiend* Synchro monsters.7 This design means the Resonators are the active core, utilizing their Fiend type and DARK attribute to facilitate Synchro climbing, while the RDA Synchro monsters serve as the high-impact finality of the combo chain. The modern consistency of the deck is heavily attributed to recent support cards, particularly

*Soul Resonator* and *Bone Archfiend*, which transform a single Normal Summon into a sprawling Synchro ladder.11

## II. The Interlocking Archfiend Search and Utility Matrix

The exceptional consistency of the modern RDA strategy lies in its highly efficient, redundant search matrix, which seamlessly connects the Fiend-Type Resonator components to the Dragon-Type Synchro Extra Deck bosses. This system allows for the rapid conversion of starting resources into field presence and powerful disruption.

### A. Core Search Mechanisms: Archfiend Card Economy

The entire strategy hinges on a small group of cards that perform targeted searches based on Type and Level constraints:

1. ***Soul Resonator*** (Level 3 Fiend/Tuner): This card functions as the primary starter. Upon Normal Summon, it activates to search any Level 4 or lower Fiend monster from the Deck.11 This broad search pool ensures access to critical combo pieces like  
   *Bone Archfiend* or other crucial Resonator Tuners.
2. ***Bone Archfiend*** (Level 4 Fiend/Effect): This monster is essential for converting the initial search into immediate field presence and GY setup. It can Special Summon itself from the hand by discarding one card, and it can manipulate its own Level (reducing it by 1) to simultaneously send one Fiend Tuner directly from the Deck to the GY.11
3. ***Vision Resonator*** (Level 2 Fiend/Tuner): While it can Special Summon itself freely if a *Red Dragon Archfiend* is controlled, its most powerful application occurs when it is sent to the GY. When utilized as Synchro Material or sent by a card effect (such as *Bone Archfiend*’s), it searches either *Crimson Gaia* or *Red Zone* from the Deck or GY, ensuring access to necessary continuous Spell/Trap support.11
4. ***Crimson Gaia*** (Continuous Spell): This card guarantees follow-up and consistency. During the Main Phase, it can add one *Red Dragon Archfiend* or any card that explicitly mentions *Red Dragon Archfiend* from the Deck or GY to the hand.13 This ability directly connects the Resonator engine's initial setup to the high-level Synchro monsters and their support.

### B. Primary Starters and Search Targets (The Resonator/Fiend Bridge)

The deck’s explosive potential is realized through precise sequencing that transforms the initial Normal Summon into immediate Synchro materials:

#### Primary Combo Path:

The sequence begins with the Normal Summon of *Soul Resonator*, which searches *Bone Archfiend*.11

*Bone Archfiend* then Special Summons itself by discarding a card. Immediately following, *Bone Archfiend* uses its Level modulation effect to send a key Tuner, typically *Crimson Resonator*, from the Deck directly to the GY.12 This sequence establishes a Level 3 Tuner (

*Soul Resonator*) and a Level 3 Non-Tuner (*Bone Archfiend*), ready to Synchro Summon the Level 6 *Red Rising Dragon*.

The operational effectiveness of this structure is fundamentally derived from the deliberate cross-archetype synergy defined by the DARK/Fiend attributes. *Soul Resonator* searches *Bone Archfiend* because it is a Fiend.11

*Bone Archfiend* then immediately sets up the required Tuner in the GY, a necessary prerequisite for the subsequent revival step. This design philosophy minimizes the initial card investment needed for the combo, significantly increasing the deck’s overall consistency by ensuring the core extender (*Bone Archfiend*) is always accessible via the primary starter (*Soul Resonator*).

Table Title: Primary Archfiend/Resonator Search Matrix

| **Searcher** | **Type/Attribute** | **Trigger Condition** | **Target Pool** | **Role in Combo** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Soul Resonator | Lvl 3 Fiend/Tuner | Normal Summon | Level 4 or lower Fiend (Bone Archfiend, Resonators) | Primary Starter, 1-Card Enabler |
| Bone Archfiend | Lvl 4 Fiend | Level modulation effect | 1 Fiend Tuner sent to GY (Crimson, Vision) | Setup, Deck Thinning, Extender |
| Vision Resonator | Lvl 2 Fiend/Tuner | Sent to the GY | Crimson Gaia, Red Zone | Resource Acquisition, Backrow Setup |
| Crimson Gaia | Continuous Spell | Main Phase Activation | "Red Dragon Archfiend" or card mentioning it | Consistency, Follow-up, Recursion 13 |

## III. The Resonator Engine: Accelerator for the Fiendish Strategy

The deck's ability to achieve high-Level Synchro Summons multiple times within a single turn is mediated almost entirely by the interaction between the core Resonator Tuners and the intermediary Synchro Monster, *Red Rising Dragon*.

### A. Key Resonator Components and Their Role in Synchro Climbing

1. ***Crimson Resonator*** (Level 2 Fiend/Tuner): This is the deck's essential extender. It can Special Summon itself if the field contains only Synchro Monsters. Crucially, if it is used as material for a Synchro Summon of a DARK Dragon Synchro Monster (which all RDA bosses are), it triggers an effect that Special Summons up to two additional "Resonator" monsters (with different names) from the Deck.12 This effect is the single most important mechanism for generating the high density of Tuners required for Level 12 boss monsters.
2. ***Synkron Resonator*** (Level 1 Fiend/Tuner): A utility Tuner that can Special Summon itself if an RDA Synchro Monster is on the field. When used as Synchro Material, it recycles a Resonator Tuner from the GY.15

### B. Synchro Ladder Construction: Red Rising Dragon

The Synchro climb begins with *Red Rising Dragon* (Level 6 Synchro), typically summoned using *Bone Archfiend* and *Soul Resonator*. Upon Synchro Summon, *Red Rising Dragon* immediately revives a "Resonator" Tuner used as its material.12 If the Tuner revived is

*Crimson Resonator*, this action initiates a massive chain reaction:

1. *Red Rising Dragon* revives *Crimson Resonator*.12
2. *Crimson Resonator* activates its effect, pulling two more Resonators (*Synkron Resonator* and *Vision Resonator*) from the Deck.12

This rapid board flood transforms the initial two monsters into four or more bodies, providing the necessary Levels and monster count to immediately proceed up the Synchro ladder toward Level 8, 9, and 12 threats.

The strategy necessitates careful management of the Extra Monster Zone (EMZ). To prevent a stall in the combo, the deck utilizes *Scarred Dragon Archfiend* (Level 8 Synchro). *Scarred Dragon Archfiend* is frequently summoned in the EMZ and has a mandatory effect when used as material for a subsequent Synchro Summon: it Special Summons the original *Red Dragon Archfiend* (OG RDA, Level 8) from the Extra Deck.11 This mechanism effectively clears the EMZ position, maintaining combo momentum and preparing the zone for the final, highest-impact boss monster, such as

*Hot Red Dragon Archfiend Abyss* or *Red Supernova Dragon*.

## IV. Step-by-Step Combo Lines for AI Canvas Functionality

The following sequences detail the core combo structures, providing explicit, numbered instructions and resource management states, designed for optimal integration with analytical visualization tools.

### A. The 1-Card Starter Sequence: Soul Resonator to Level 9 Disruption

This path utilizes only *Soul Resonator* and results in a potent disruption field with resilient follow-up.

| Step | Action | Card State Change (Field/GY/Hand) | Note |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1.** | Normal Summon *Soul Resonator* (SR). | Field: SR (Lvl 3). Hand: +1 *Bone Archfiend* (BA). | Primary searcher activates to acquire extender.11 |
| **2.** | Activate *Bone Archfiend* (BA) effect, discard 1 card, Special Summon BA. | Field: SR (Lvl 3), BA (Lvl 4). GY: +1 discarded card. | SS extender sets up GY. |
| **3.** | Activate *Bone Archfiend* level modulation, target BA. Reduce level by 1. Send *Crimson Resonator* (CR) from Deck to GY. | Field: SR (Lvl 3), BA (Lvl 3). GY: +1 CR (Lvl 2). | BA is now Lvl 3; CR is set for revival.12 |
| **4.** | Synchro Summon **Red Rising Dragon** (RRD, Lvl 6) using SR and BA. | Field: RRD (Lvl 6) in EMZ. GY: SR, BA. | Intermediary Synchro. |
| **5.** | Activate *Red Rising Dragon* effect, revive *Crimson Resonator* (CR) from GY. | Field: RRD (Lvl 6), CR (Lvl 2). GY: CR revived. | Begins the Tuner flood. |
| **6.** | Activate *Crimson Resonator* effect (triggered by being revived), Special Summon *Synkron Resonator* (SyR) and *Vision Resonator* (VR) from Deck. | Field: RRD (Lvl 6), CR (Lvl 2), SyR (Lvl 1), VR (Lvl 2). | Maximum Synchro material generated.12 |
| **7.** | Synchro Summon **Scarred Dragon Archfiend** (ScDA, Lvl 8) using RRD and CR. | Field: ScDA (Lvl 8) in EMZ, SyR (Lvl 1), VR (Lvl 2). GY: RRD, CR. | Bridge Synchro. |
| **8.** | Activate *Vision Resonator* effect in GY (used for Synchro), add **Crimson Gaia** (CG) to hand. | Hand: +1 CG. | Searches essential continuous Spell.12 |
| **9.** | Synchro Summon **Hot Red Dragon Archfiend Abyss** (HRDA-A, Lvl 9) using ScDA and SyR. | Field: HRDA-A (Lvl 9) in EMZ, VR (Lvl 2). GY: ScDA, SyR. | Establishes Quick Effect negation.16 |
| **10.** | Activate *Scarred Dragon Archfiend* effect in GY (triggered by Synchro Material), Special Summon **Red Dragon Archfiend** (RDA, Lvl 8) from Extra Deck into the Main Monster Zone (MMZ). | Field: HRDA-A (Lvl 9), VR (Lvl 2), RDA (Lvl 8). | Clears EMZ space for potential follow-up, adds pressure.11 |
| **11.** | Activate **Crimson Gaia** from hand. Use its Main Phase effect to search 1 card (e.g., *Red Zone*). | Field: CG (Continuous Spell). Hand: +1 *Red Zone*. | Establishes recursion and trap disruption potential.13 |

### B. Advanced Chain: Generating Red Supernova Dragon

This sequence demonstrates the high-ceiling output, requiring the density of Tuners provided by the core engine to achieve the Level 12 boss monster, *Red Supernova Dragon*.

* **Initial Setup:** Follow Steps 1–6 from Combo A, resulting in: Field: RRD (Lvl 6), CR (Lvl 2), SyR (Lvl 1), VR (Lvl 2). GY: SR, BA.
* **Continuation:**

| Step | Action | Card State Change (Field/GY/Hand) | Note |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **7.** | Synchro Summon **Red Dragon Archfiend** (RDA, Lvl 8) using RRD (Lvl 6) and CR (Lvl 2). | Field: RDA (Lvl 8), SyR (Lvl 1), VR (Lvl 2). GY: RRD, CR. | A direct path to a Level 8 Synchro. |
| **8.** | Special Summon *Synkron Resonator* (SyR, Lvl 1) from GY by its effect (since RDA is on the field). | Field: RDA (Lvl 8), SyR (Lvl 1), VR (Lvl 2), SyR (Lvl 1). GY: SyR recycled. | Generates a third Tuner (4 Tuners total now in play or GY if counting materials). |
| **9.** | Synchro Summon **Red Supernova Dragon** (RSD, Lvl 12) using RDA (Lvl 8) + VR (Lvl 2) + SyR (Lvl 1) + SyR (Lvl 1). | Field: RSD (Lvl 12) in EMZ. GY: RDA, VR, SyR (x2). Tuners in GY: 4+. | Fulfills the requirement of 3 Tuners + 1+ Synchro Non-Tuner.17 |
| **10.** | Activate *Vision Resonator* effect in GY, add **Crimson Gaia** to hand. | Hand: +1 CG. | Sets up follow-up. |

## V. Endboard States and Disruption Profiles

The strategic effectiveness of the modern RDA Resonator deck is rooted in its capacity to construct a layered defense, combining immediate, proactive interruption with high-resistance boss monsters and cyclical recursion.

### A. Standard Endboard Configuration and Resilience

The primary 1-card combo produces a field defined by proactive negation and guaranteed future resources, maximizing resilience.

1. **Quick Effect Negation:** *Hot Red Dragon Archfiend Abyss* (HRDA-A, Level 9) requires 1 Tuner and 1 non-Tuner DARK Dragon Synchro Monster for its Summon.16 It provides a versatile Quick Effect interruption, allowing the player to target and negate the effects of any one face-up card the opponent controls until the end of the turn, applicable to Spells, Traps, or monsters.16
2. **Protection and Field Control:** The highest-ceiling boss monster, *Red Supernova Dragon* (Level 12), is mandatory for achieving true resilience. It requires three Tuners plus one or more non-Tuner Synchro Monsters.17 It possesses inherent immunity to destruction by opponent's card effects. More critically, as a Quick Effect, it can banish itself and all cards the opponent controls when the opponent activates a monster effect or declares an attack, only to return during the next End Phase.17 This effect provides a board wipe that is exceedingly difficult to stop due to the monster's immunity.
3. **Recursion and Follow-up:** *Crimson Gaia* is essential for maintaining momentum beyond the initial turn. If an RDA monster is destroyed by battle or card effect, *Crimson Gaia* immediately Special Summons a *Red Dragon Archfiend* from the GY.13 Furthermore, it grants utility by changing all opponent's monsters to face-down Defense Position when an RDA monster declares an attack.13 This ensures that even if the opponent successfully breaks the primary line of defense, the RDA threat can quickly regenerate its presence and ATK power.

The deck structure purposefully aims for a multi-layered defense. The use of an inherent protection effect (Supernova) paired with a targeted, preventative Quick Effect negation (Abyss) ensures that key resources are protected while the opponent is forced to utilize resources inefficiently. The recovery provided by *Crimson Gaia* provides crucial resilience against common board wipes or disruptive cards.

### B. Detailed Analysis of Key Boss Monsters

| **Monster/Card** | **Level/Type** | **Primary Disruption/Effect** | **Quick Effect?** | **Strategic Function** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Hot Red Dragon Archfiend Abyss | Lvl 9 Synchro Dragon | Target 1 face-up card opponent controls; negate effects 16 | Yes (Quick Effect) | Proactive, reusable interruption against high-priority targets. |
| Red Supernova Dragon | Lvl 12 Synchro Dragon | Cannot be destroyed by opponent's effects. Quick Effect mass banish of opponent's board 17 | Yes (Quick Effect) | Ultimate deterrent; immune threat with non-destruction removal. |
| Red Nova Dragon | Lvl 12 Synchro Dragon | Requires 2 Tuners + RDA. Cannot be destroyed by opponent's effects 19 | No (Attack Negation/Banish) | Older alternative to RSD; focuses on ATK boost (500 per Tuner in GY) and targeted attack negation/banishment.19 |
| Crimson Gaia | Continuous Spell | Summon RDA from GY upon destruction; search RDA cards 13 | No (Trigger/Activation) | Sustain, recursion, and continuous field presence. |

## VI. Hybridization and External Archetype Synergy

The competitive viability of the modern RDA/Resonator build is contingent upon its ability to seamlessly integrate powerful external engines that share the required Type and Attribute constraints, primarily DARK, Dragon, and Fiend.

### A. The Bystial Integration

The Bystial archetype (Level 6 DARK Dragon monsters) is the most optimized external engine for RDA/Resonator, primarily because of its perfect Attribute and Type alignment.20

1. **Attribute and Type Matching:** The Resonator monsters, *Bone Archfiend*, and the final RDA Synchros are all DARK.20 Bystials Special Summon themselves by banishing a DARK or LIGHT monster from either GY, providing powerful mid-combo interruption and efficient Special Summoning of high-level bodies.21 Banishment of DARK monsters from the GY is often beneficial, as the deck requires DARK materials to fuel the summoning of the Level 10 Synchro,  
   *Bystial Dis Pater*.12
2. **Synchro Flexibility:** A Level 6 Bystial, such as *Bystial Lubellion*, combines easily with a Level 2 Tuner (*Crimson Resonator* or *Vision Resonator*) to produce an immediate Level 8 Synchro, such as *Scarred Dragon Archfiend*.20 This greatly reduces the resource strain and allows the deck to skip several intermediate Synchro steps. Furthermore, the ability of the Resonator engine to produce Lvl 8 and Lvl 9 Synchros quickly facilitates the summoning of the Level 10  
   *Bystial Dis Pater*, enhancing disruption and banish-zone recursion.12

### B. Strategic Extenders and Consistency Tools

In addition to dedicated monster engines, the deck relies on high-utility staple cards to address consistency issues and manage disruption.

Contemporary decklists frequently include cards like *Triple Tactics Thrust*.9 For a dedicated combo strategy,

*Thrust* is critical for accessing vital Spell/Trap cards—like *Crimson Gaia* or the disruptive *Red Zone*—following an interruption from the opponent. This access provides immediate recovery or necessary negation to secure the turn. The inherent structure of the deck, relying on precise searches and Type manipulation, dictates that any successful external component must be DARK and/or Dragon Type. This constraint ensures that the core Fiend searchers, like *Soul Resonator*, and the Synchro material requirements for the Dragon bosses are always mutually reinforced, maximizing overall efficiency across all phases of the duel.

## VII. Conclusions

The competitive status of the "Archfiend" archetype in the TCG is characterized by a complete bifurcation. The legacy "Chess Archfiend" theme is non-viable due to its slow, reactive destruction mechanics and outdated resource loops. The dominant force is the **Red Dragon Archfiend (RDA) Resonator** engine, which uses a highly sophisticated and redundant search chain to initiate explosive Synchro Summons.

The modern deck's core efficiency is derived from the synergistic relationships between DARK/Fiend monsters (*Soul Resonator*, *Bone Archfiend*) and their ability to rapidly dump and revive Tuners (*Crimson Resonator*) through the intermediary Synchro *Red Rising Dragon*. This system ensures a dense concentration of Tuners, which is necessary to achieve the Lvl 12 boss monsters like *Red Supernova Dragon*. The final endboard is layered, featuring the Quick Effect negation of *Hot Red Dragon Archfiend Abyss* and the comprehensive protection/removal offered by *Red Supernova Dragon*, backed by the unparalleled recursion and follow-up utility of *Crimson Gaia*.

The inclusion of external DARK Dragon engines, such as the Bystials, further reinforces the deck’s capabilities by providing flexible high-level material, GY control, and additional pathways to powerful Synchro monsters like *Bystial Dis Pater*. For competitive optimization, players must adhere strictly to this DARK/Dragon/Fiend attribute alignment, ensuring that all components contribute maximally to the Synchro climbing sequence and endboard resilience.

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