# An Expert Analysis of the "End of the World" Archetype: Strategy, Combos, and Synergies

## Section 1: The Core Pantheon - A Card-by-Card Analysis

### Introduction to the Archetype

The "End of the World" card series is not defined by a single card, but rather serves as the thematic moniker for the entire "Demise and Ruin" Ritual archetype.1 At its core, this archetype embodies a high-risk, high-reward "go-second" strategy, designed to achieve a One-Turn Kill (OTK) through overwhelming offensive power and spectacular, field-clearing effects. Its history traces back to the formidable "Demise OTK" decks of 2007, which leveraged the original Demise, King of Armageddon to great effect.3 In the modern era, the archetype received a wave of new support in an attempt to address the inherent resource-intensive nature of the Ritual Summoning mechanic, introducing retrained "Supreme" and "Agent/Angel" versions of its iconic monarchs.4 This evolution has created a complex and powerful, albeit inconsistent, strategy centered around bringing about a swift and decisive end to the duel.

### The Monarchs of Armageddon (DARK/Fiend)

The DARK Fiend-Type "Demise" monsters represent the archetype's primary offensive force, specializing in mass destruction.

#### Demise, King of Armageddon

This Level 8 Ritual Monster is the iconic original. His effect is the bedrock of the archetype's identity: by paying 2000 Life Points, he can destroy all other cards on the field.5 While his 2400 ATK is modest by modern standards, his name is of critical strategic importance. As he is explicitly named on the Ritual Spell End of the World, he becomes a searchable target for one of the game's most powerful generic Ritual support cards, Pre-Preparation of Rites, providing a vital link to consistency that his modern counterparts lack.1

#### Demise, Agent of Armageddon

The Level 4 Demise, Agent of Armageddon is a modern utility monster designed to support the larger bosses. His name is treated as Demise, King of Armageddon while in the hand or on the field, allowing him to be summoned by older support cards like End of the World.3 When Ritual Summoned, he provides valuable spot removal by destroying one face-up monster on the field.5 However, his most significant contribution is his Graveyard (GY) effect. If sent to the GY, he can target a Ritual Monster you control and make its effects unchainable by the opponent for the rest of the turn. This is a crucial tool for ensuring that the game-winning board wipe from a card like Demise, Supreme King of Armageddon resolves without being interrupted by an opponent's card effect.3

#### Demise, Supreme King of Armageddon

The Level 10 Demise, Supreme King of Armageddon is the deck's primary win condition. He boasts a formidable 3000 ATK and a significantly upgraded version of the original's board wipe: for a 2000 LP cost, he destroys as many other cards on the field as possible and inflicts 200 burn damage to the opponent for each of their cards destroyed.5 He also provides a continuous effect that prevents all of your Ritual Monsters from being destroyed by battle. Most critically, if he is Ritual Summoned by Tributing only other Ritual Monsters, his devastating board wipe effect can be activated at no LP cost. This powerful bonus rewards a more complex and resource-intensive setup, encouraging a specific style of deck building.1

### The Queens of Oblivion (LIGHT/Fairy)

As counterparts to the destructive Demise monsters, the LIGHT Fairy-Type "Ruin" monsters provide protection and the final push for an OTK.

#### Ruin, Queen of Oblivion

The original Level 8 Queen, her effect is straightforward: if she destroys an opponent's monster by battle, she can make a second attack in a row.5 While simple, this effect is highly effective in an OTK scenario after the field has been cleared by her husband. Like the original Demise, her primary modern role is to serve as a searchable name for Pre-Preparation of Rites via the Ritual Spell End of the World.2

#### Ruin, Angel of Oblivion

Ruin, Angel of Oblivion is the Level 4 utility counterpart to Demise, Agent. The turn she is Ritual Summoned, she can make up to two attacks on monsters.5 Her GY effect mirrors that of the Agent: when sent to the GY, she can target one of your Ritual Monsters and prevent the opponent from activating cards or effects when any of your Ritual Monsters declare an attack. This grants a powerful "Armades-like" protection to your entire board, ensuring your attacks connect without interference.5

#### Ruin, Supreme Queen of Oblivion

The Level 10 Ruin, Supreme Queen of Oblivion is the deck's premier protector and OTK enabler. Her 2900 ATK is complemented by a powerful continuous effect that grants all of your Ritual Monsters protection from destruction by card effects.5 When she is on the field alongside Demise, Supreme King, they create a formidable lock where your Ritual Monsters are protected from both battle and effect destruction. Her bonus effect for being summoned with only Ritual Monsters as Tributes is the ability to make a second attack during each Battle Phase. This is the key to achieving the 8000+ damage required for an OTK, as it allows her to attack twice after Demise has cleared the board.1

### The Apocalyptic Arsenal (Spells & Traps)

These are the spell and trap cards that facilitate the summoning of the archetype's powerful monarchs.

#### End of the World

The original Ritual Spell, End of the World is used to summon the Level 8 Demise, King of Armageddon and Ruin, Queen of Oblivion (and by extension, their Level 4 counterparts, whose names change in the hand).7 Its primary drawback is its strict tribute requirement: the total Levels of the tributed monsters must *exactly* equal the Level of the Ritual Monster being summoned, making it less flexible than its modern successor.7

#### Cycle of the World

Cycle of the World is the modern workhorse Ritual Spell. It can be used to summon any "Demise" or "Ruin" monster and possesses a more forgiving tribute condition, allowing the total Levels of the tributed monsters to equal or exceed the required Level.9 Furthermore, it has a vital GY effect for longer games: except the turn it was sent there, you can shuffle it back into the Deck to add one End of the World from your Deck to your hand, and then you can add a Demise, King of Armageddon or Ruin, Queen of Oblivion from your GY to your hand, establishing a slow but valuable resource loop.11

#### Breaking of the World

This Field Spell is a multifaceted support piece. Its first effect allows you to target a Ritual Monster you control and reveal one in your hand, making the revealed monster's Level become the same as the one on the field for the turn. This is crucial for manipulating Levels to meet the exact requirements of End of the World.12 Its second effect generates significant advantage: once per turn, if a "Demise" or "Ruin" is Ritual Summoned, you can activate one of two effects: draw one card, or destroy one card on the field. This helps to immediately recoup the resources spent on the Ritual Summon.13

#### Turning of the World

This Quick-Play Spell is a potential game-changer. Its unique effect allows you to Ritual Summon a "Ruin, Queen of Oblivion" or "Demise, King of Armageddon" directly from your Deck.15 This provides an incredible out to hands that lack a Ritual Monster and enables powerful disruptive plays during the opponent's turn. This immense power is balanced by a steep cost: you must Tribute *Ritual Monsters* from your hand whose total Levels equal or exceed that of the monster you are summoning. This makes it a high-risk, high-reward play that is central to more advanced strategies.4

#### Renewal of the World

This Continuous Trap offers recursion and summoning from the Graveyard.16 However, its effects are generally considered too slow for the fast pace of modern play, as it relies on being set for a turn and is vulnerable to removal.17

The design of the Demise and Ruin archetype contains a fundamental tension. The most powerful effects, such as the free board wipe from Demise, Supreme King and the double attack from Ruin, Supreme Queen, are unlocked only when they are Ritual Summoned using other Ritual Monsters as Tributes.5 The potent Quick-Play Spell Turning of the World also exclusively demands Ritual Monsters as tribute.15 This design philosophy explicitly encourages a high count of Ritual Monsters in the deck to maximize these powerful payoffs. Yet, the primary weakness of all Ritual-based strategies is their propensity to "brick" by drawing hands full of unplayable high-level monsters without the necessary spells or tributes to summon them.1 Consequently, the archetype's own mechanics push players toward a deck-building strategy that exacerbates its greatest inherent flaw. This internal conflict is the principal reason why the "End of the World" archetype is almost never played in a "pure" form and is fundamentally reliant on external engines to resolve a problem it cannot solve on its own.

## Section 2: The Engine Room - Consistency and Search Dynamics

The Demise and Ruin strategy is heavily dependent on its ability to assemble specific multi-card combinations. This section maps the network of search and recursion effects that are critical for achieving consistency.

### Internal Search & Recursion

The archetype's own consistency tools are limited and primarily focused on recovery rather than proactive searching. The main internal tool is the Graveyard effect of Cycle of the World, which can be shuffled into the deck to search for End of the World and recover one of the original boss monsters from the GY.9 While useful for a follow-up turn, this is too slow for setting up an initial combo. The Field Spell, Breaking of the World, can provide a card draw upon a successful Ritual Summon, which helps to maintain card advantage but does not actively search for missing pieces.13

### Essential Generic Ritual Support

Given its internal limitations, the deck's consistency hinges on some of the most powerful generic Ritual support cards ever printed.

* **Manju of the Ten Thousand Hands**: A cornerstone of nearly every Ritual strategy. Upon being Normal or Flip Summoned, Manju allows you to add any one Ritual Monster or Ritual Spell from your Deck to your hand. This unparalleled flexibility makes it the deck's best Normal Summon, capable of finding whichever combo piece is missing.1
* **Preparation of Rites**: This Normal Spell searches for any Level 7 or lower Ritual Monster from the Deck. In this archetype, its only valid targets are the Level 4 Demise, Agent of Armageddon and Ruin, Angel of Oblivion. While more limited than other searchers, it provides direct access to these valuable utility monsters.1
* **Pre-Preparation of Rites**: This is arguably the single most powerful consistency card available to the deck. It is a direct "+1" in card advantage, allowing you to add one Ritual Spell from your Deck to your hand, and then add one Ritual Monster from your Deck or GY whose name is specifically listed on that spell's text. Its synergy with End of the World to search for both the spell itself and either Demise, King of Armageddon or Ruin, Queen of Oblivion is a foundational opening play.1

This network of interactions can be complex, as each searcher has specific restrictions. The following table provides a clear visual map of the deck's search capabilities, illustrating the pathways to assembling the necessary combo pieces.

### The "End of the World" Search Matrix

| **Searcher Card** | **Demise, King (L8)** | **Ruin, Queen (L8)** | **Demise, Agent (L4)** | **Ruin, Angel (L4)** | **Demise, Supreme (L10)** | **Ruin, Supreme (L10)** | **End of the World** | **Cycle of the World** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Manju of the Ten Thousand Hands | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Pre-Preparation of Rites¹ | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |  |  | ✓ |  |
| Preparation of Rites |  |  | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |  |  |
| Cycle of the World (GY)² | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |  |  | ✓ |  |
| Impcantation Candoll |  |  |  |  |  |  | ✓ | ✓ |
| Impcantation Talismandra | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |
| Drytron Alpha Thuban | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |
| Herald of the Arc Light (GY) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

¹ Note: Pre-Preparation of Rites can only search End of the World and the Level 8 monsters specifically named on it.

² Note: Cycle of the World's GY effect searches End of the World from the Deck and recovers a Level 8 monster from the GY.

A critical strategic bottleneck emerges from the interaction between the deck's best searcher and its best monsters. Pre-Preparation of Rites is a phenomenal card that generates immediate card advantage, a "2-for-1" search that is vital for any resource-heavy Ritual deck.21 However, its activation condition is strict: the Ritual Monster's exact name must be printed on the Ritual Spell's text. End of the World fulfills this condition for the original Level 8 Demise, King of Armageddon and Ruin, Queen of Oblivion, allowing Pre-Prep to search for these older, weaker monsters.1 Conversely, the modern and far superior Level 10 "Supreme" monsters are not named on any Ritual Spell. Their effects to be treated as their original counterparts are only active in the hand or on the field, not in the Deck, meaning Pre-Prep cannot search for them.6 This creates a fundamental paradox: the deck's most powerful search card can only access its least powerful boss monsters. This design flaw forces players to rely on less efficient, generic searchers like Manju or to incorporate entire external engines specifically to circumvent this issue, and it is a direct cause of the deck's infamous inconsistency when built without such support.

## Section 3: Blueprints for Destruction - Core Combos and End Boards

This section provides a tactical breakdown of the archetype's primary strategic sequences, outlining the path from initial setup to a game-winning board state.

### The Foundational OTK (Go-Second Strategy)

This is the deck's signature play, a linear but powerful sequence designed to win the game in a single Battle Phase after breaking the opponent's established board.

* **Step 1: Assemble Resources.** The initial goal is to use the searchers detailed in Section 2 to gather the key components: Demise, Supreme King of Armageddon, Ruin, Supreme Queen of Oblivion, a Ritual Spell (preferably Cycle of the World), and enough monsters to serve as tribute for both summons (a total of 20 Levels).
* **Step 2: Summon the King & Wipe the Board.** The first major action is to Ritual Summon Demise, Supreme King of Armageddon. Immediately upon his successful summon, his effect should be activated. For a cost of 2000 LP, he will destroy all other cards on the field, clearing the way for a direct assault.
* **Step 3: Summon the Queen.** With the opponent's board now empty, the next step is to use the remaining resources to Ritual Summon Ruin, Supreme Queen of Oblivion. This is the most resource-intensive part of the combo, requiring a second Ritual Spell and additional tribute fodder.
* **Step 4: The Final Assault.** With both monarchs on the field, the Battle Phase begins. An attack from Demise inflicts 3000 damage. An attack from Ruin inflicts 2900 damage. If Ruin was summoned using only Ritual Monsters as tribute, her effect allows her to make a second attack. The total damage from this sequence ($3000 + 2900 + 2900 = 8800$) is more than enough to defeat an opponent with full Life Points.1

### Disruptive Sequences (Interacting on the Opponent's Turn)

While primarily an OTK deck, the archetype has access to a powerful disruptive play through its Quick-Play Spell.

#### Turning of the World Ambush

* **Setup:** During your turn, Set Turning of the World to your Spell & Trap Zone. It is crucial to have at least two Ritual Monsters in your hand to serve as tribute, such as Demise, Agent of Armageddon and Ruin, Angel of Oblivion.
* **Execution:** During your opponent's Main Phase, ideally after they have committed a key monster to the field, activate the set Turning of the World.
* **Tribute** the Ritual Monsters from your hand to meet the summoning cost. This allows you to Ritual Summon a monster like Demise, Agent of Armageddon directly from your Deck.
* **Result:** Demise, Agent's on-summon effect will trigger, destroying the opponent's monster and disrupting their play. As a bonus, the tributed Ritual Monsters are now in the Graveyard, ready to apply their protective effects on your subsequent turn.3

### Visualizing the Ideal End Board

The deck's optimal end board is not simply about offensive power; it establishes layers of protection that make it incredibly difficult for an opponent to dismantle.

* **The Core:** The board is centered around Demise, Supreme King of Armageddon and Ruin, Supreme Queen of Oblivion.
* **The Lock:** Demise provides continuous protection from battle destruction, while Ruin provides continuous protection from card effect destruction.5 This combination makes your Ritual Monsters immune to the two most common forms of removal in the game.
* **GY Reinforcements:** The true strength of the board comes from the Graveyard. With Demise, Agent of Armageddon in the GY, your opponent cannot activate cards or effects in response to the activation of your Ritual Monsters' effects. With Ruin, Angel of Oblivion in the GY, they cannot respond when your Ritual Monsters declare an attack.3
* **The Result:** The final board state consists of high-ATK behemoths that are nearly indestructible and whose actions are effectively unchainable. While resource-intensive to assemble, this represents the deck's ultimate, game-winning goal.

When analyzed from a resource management perspective, the deck's core win condition reveals a significant flaw. The primary OTK requires the successful Ritual Summoning of two Level 10 monsters in a single turn.1 The Ritual Summon mechanic is inherently resource-negative, typically demanding a minimum of three cards—the Ritual Monster, the Ritual Spell, and tribute fodder—to place a single monster on the field. Therefore, summoning two such monsters requires, at a minimum, six cards. This consumes a player's entire starting hand, and that is assuming perfect draws without even accounting for the high Level requirements for the tributes. This demonstrates that the deck's central strategy is, from a mathematical standpoint, practically impossible to achieve with any consistency without external support. This is not merely a minor weakness but a fundamental design flaw that directly causes the deck's "hit or miss" reputation and proves that external engines are not an optimization but a mandatory component for basic functionality.23

## Section 4: Forging Alliances - Integrating External Engines

To overcome its inherent inconsistency and resource deficit, the "End of the World" archetype must be integrated with powerful external support engines. The choice of engine fundamentally alters the deck's playstyle, resilience, and overall power ceiling.

### The Impcantation Pact (The Standard Engine)

The Impcantation engine is the most common and directly synergistic pairing for Demise and Ruin. It is designed to solve the two most pressing issues for any Ritual deck: generating tribute fodder and searching for combo pieces. By revealing a Ritual Monster or Spell from the hand, an Impcantation monster can Special Summon itself from the hand and another Impcantation from the Deck. This action instantly provides two monsters on the field for tribute while also searching for whichever Ritual piece is missing.2 The engine's only significant drawback is that activating any Impcantation monster's effect locks the player out of the Extra Deck for the remainder of the turn.24

* **Key Cards & Synergy:** Impcantation Candoll searches a Ritual Spell, while Impcantation Talismandra searches a Ritual Monster. These are the primary starters. Their Levels, 4 and 6 respectively, conveniently add up to 10—the exact Level required to summon the Supreme King and Queen, making them perfect tribute material.2
* **Sample Combo:**
  + **Starting Hand:** Impcantation Talismandra, Cycle of the World.
  + **Step 1:** Activate the effect of Impcantation Talismandra in hand by revealing Cycle of the World.
  + **Step 2:** Special Summon Talismandra (Level 6) from your hand and Impcantation Candoll (Level 4) from your Deck.
  + **Step 3:** The on-summon effect of Talismandra activates, allowing you to add Demise, Supreme King of Armageddon from your Deck to your hand.
  + **Step 4:** The on-summon effect of Candoll activates. Since you already possess a Ritual Spell, you can add another one, such as Turning of the World, for a follow-up play.
  + **Result:** A simple two-card hand has been converted into two monsters on the field totaling Level 10, the required Ritual Monster in hand, and the required Ritual Spell in hand. This sequence demonstrates the incredible resource efficiency and consistency that the Impcantation engine provides.

### The Drytron Protocol (The High-Power Engine)

The Drytron engine offers a more powerful and explosive alternative. It revolutionizes the Ritual mechanic by using a monster's ATK for tribute cost instead of its Level.25 The archetype's Ritual Spell, Meteonis Drytron, allows you to Tribute Drytron monsters from your hand or field whose total ATK meets or exceeds the ATK of the Ritual Monster being summoned. Since all main deck Drytron monsters have 2000 ATK, summoning a 3000 ATK monster like Demise, Supreme King becomes incredibly efficient, often requiring only two Drytron monsters.

* **Key Cards & Synergy:** Drytron Alpha Thuban can search any Ritual Monster, and Drytron Zeta Aldhibah can search any Ritual Spell. The true power of the engine lies in the fact that each main deck Drytron can Special Summon itself from the hand or GY by Tributing another Drytron or a Ritual Monster. This creates a rapid, self-sustaining loop that generates resources and assembles the entire combo with remarkable speed.25
* **Strategic Impact:** Integrating Drytrons elevates the deck from a linear OTK strategy into a more resilient and complex combo deck. It becomes capable of building boards with multiple interruptions, such as those provided by the Herald series, in addition to the standard Demise and Ruin bosses.18

### Niche Power Plays: Dogmatika & Zaborg (The Glass Cannon Engine)

This is an explosive, all-or-nothing strategy that weaponizes the Extra Deck as a toolbox to be sent directly to the Graveyard for powerful effects.

* **The Combo:** The core of this strategy is to Normal Summon Zaborg the Mega Monarch by Tributing a LIGHT monster. Its effect allows you to target a monster on the field (including itself) and destroy it. If the destroyed monster was LIGHT, you can then send a number of cards from your Extra Deck to the GY equal to that monster's original Level.28 By targeting Zaborg itself (a Level 8 LIGHT monster), you can send 8 cards from your Extra Deck to the GY.
* **The Payoff:** The Extra Deck is filled with monsters that have powerful effects when sent to the Graveyard. By sending multiple copies of Herald of the Arc Light (which searches a Ritual Monster or Spell when sent to the GY) and Elder Entity N'tss (which destroys a card on the field when sent to the GY), the single resolution of Zaborg's effect can simultaneously destroy multiple cards your opponent controls while searching your entire Demise and Ruin combo. This play perfectly aligns with the deck's go-second, board-breaking philosophy and can often win the game on the spot.29

The "End of the World" archetype is less a self-sufficient strategy and more of a "Ritual Payoff Package." The choice of external engine does not merely support its game plan; it fundamentally redefines the deck's entire strategic identity. Pairing it with **Impcantations** creates a consistent but Extra Deck-less "all-in" OTK deck, where its power is concentrated entirely in the main deck Ritual Monsters.24 Integrating the **Drytron** engine transforms it into a meta-style combo deck capable of complex, non-linear plays that can establish boards with multiple forms of interaction beyond the standard Demise/Ruin lock.25 Finally, utilizing the **Zaborg** engine turns the deck into the ultimate "glass cannon," a hyper-explosive strategy that either wins the game upon resolving its key card or fails completely if disrupted.28 The engine is not an addition but the foundation upon which the deck's identity is built.

## Section 5: Strategic Assessment and Competitive Viability

This final section provides a holistic evaluation of the "End of the World" archetype, summarizing its strategic role, inherent vulnerabilities, and overall position within the competitive landscape of the Yu-Gi-Oh! TCG.

### Core Strength: The Ultimate Board-Breaker

The deck's primary and most pronounced strength is its unparalleled ability to function as a "go-second" board-breaking strategy. In a game state where an opponent has committed numerous resources to building a formidable field, the effect of Demise, Supreme King of Armageddon serves as a powerful and often definitive answer.1 A single successful resolution can dismantle an entire board, swinging the game's tempo decisively in your favor and paving the way for a game-ending OTK. This makes the deck a potent threat against strategies that focus on creating large monster boards without sufficient spell, trap, or monster effect negation.

### Key Weaknesses and Counter-Play

Despite its explosive potential, the archetype is plagued by several critical vulnerabilities that limit its competitive ceiling.

* **Choke Points:** The deck's reliance on multi-card combos makes it extremely susceptible to disruption at key "choke points." A single, well-timed activation of a hand trap like Ash Blossom & Joyous Spring on a crucial searcher—be it Manju of the Ten Thousand Hands, Pre-Preparation of Rites, or an Impcantation monster's effect—can halt the entire strategy before it can even begin.1
* **Negation Fragility:** The strategy invests a significant amount of resources into a single, decisive Ritual Summon. Consequently, a powerful negation effect, such as a counter-trap like Solemn Judgment or a monster-based omni-negate on either the Ritual Spell's activation or Demise's subsequent board-wipe effect, is often catastrophic. The entire resource investment is lost for no gain, leaving the player with a depleted hand and an empty field.18
* **Linearity and Predictability:** The deck's core game plan is highly linear and predictable. An experienced opponent will be acutely aware of the key combo pieces and choke points, allowing them to reserve their disruption for the most impactful moment. This makes the deck difficult to pilot successfully against established meta strategies that have multiple layers of interaction and a deep understanding of opposing game plans.

### Concluding Verdict

The "End of the world" archetype is a conceptually thrilling strategy that pays homage to a classic era of the game. In its pure form, it is a relic, crippled by the resource-intensive nature of the Ritual mechanic and thoroughly outpaced by the speed and efficiency of modern Yu-Gi-Oh!.4 However, its modern identity as a "Ritual Payoff Package" allows it to be revitalized and made formidable through the integration of contemporary support engines.

When combined with a powerful and consistent engine like Impcantations or the high-ceiling Drytron system, the deck is elevated to a potent rogue strategy capable of explosive, game-ending plays. It perfectly embodies the "glass cannon" philosophy: while it may lack the resilience, adaptability, and non-linear play patterns of top-tier competitive decks, it possesses the raw, unadulterated power to bring about a swift and total end of the world for any opponent who underestimates its destructive potential.

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