# A Comprehensive Analysis of the Modern Yubel Archetype: Strategy, Combos, and Synergies

## Anatomy of the Archetype - The Core Components

The modern Yubel archetype is a complex, combo-oriented strategy that has evolved significantly from its origins. Once a passive, reactive deck, it has been transformed by new support into a proactive and highly consistent competitive force.1 Understanding this strategy requires a foundational analysis of its individual components, categorized by their function within the deck's engine.

### The Yubel Forms: A Ladder of Evolution

The core of the archetype revolves around "Yubel" and its subsequent forms, which "float" into one another upon destruction.

* **Yubel:** The original Level 10 monster is the namesake of the strategy. Its effects include immunity to battle destruction, reflecting any battle damage from attacks targeting it back to the opponent, and an End Phase maintenance cost that requires tributing another monster or destroying itself.3 When destroyed by a card effect other than its own, it Special Summons its next form. While once the deck's boss monster, its role has shifted; it is now primarily a combo piece summoned directly from the Deck. Drawing the original Yubel is often suboptimal, making it a "brick" in the opening hand, and most competitive lists play only a single copy.5
* **Yubel - Terror Incarnate:** The second form, a Level 11 monster, retains the battle immunity and damage reflection of its predecessor. Its key difference is a powerful mandatory effect: during the End Phase, it destroys all other monsters on the field.4 This provides significant board control. When it leaves the field, it summons the final form. In modern combos, it is often summoned simultaneously with the original Yubel to serve as a material for Link Summons.1
* **Yubel - The Ultimate Nightmare:** The final Level 12 form pivots from control to offense. It maintains the battle immunity but replaces the board wipe with an effect that destroys any monster it battles and inflicts effect damage to the opponent equal to that monster's ATK.4 It serves as a potent tool for closing out games but is not essential to the main combo lines, leading many players to run one or even zero copies.5
* **Spirit of Yubel:** This Level 10 monster, introduced in the *Phantom Nightmare* set, is the modern cornerstone of the archetype. It can be Special Summoned from the hand when an opponent's monster declares an attack. If Special Summoned by any means, it allows the player to search for or Set any Spell/Trap that mentions "Yubel" directly from the Deck. Most critically, if it is destroyed, it allows the player to Special Summon one of their "Yubel" monsters from their hand, Deck, Graveyard (GY), or even from the banished pile.2 This suite of effects makes it the primary target to summon and subsequently destroy to initiate the deck's powerful advantage-generating sequences.

### The Combo Enablers: Igniting the Engine

Several key monsters are dedicated to accessing and triggering the effects of the Yubel forms, providing the deck with its remarkable consistency.

* **Samsara D Lotus:** This Level 1 Fiend is the deck's premier one-card starter.2 Its primary effect allows it to be Tributed to Special Summon any "Yubel" monster from the Deck, providing the most direct route to Spirit of Yubel. It also possesses two powerful secondary effects: a Quick Effect to Tribute itself during the opponent's turn to change an opponent's monster effect into "Destroy 1 'Yubel' monster on the field," and an End Phase effect to recur itself from the GY to the hand or field if you control "Yubel".4 These effects provide both disruption and follow-up resources.
* **Gruesome Grave Squirmer:** A crucial Level 1 Fiend that acts as a combo extender. It can Special Summon itself from the hand if you control a Fiend monster and then offers the option to destroy a "Yubel" monster you control, facilitating combo lines. Its second effect allows it to be banished from the GY to Special Summon a different Fiend monster with 0 ATK/DEF from the hand or GY, enabling further extensions and recursion.1
* **Dark Beckoning Beast & Opening of the Spirit Gates:** This compact, two-card engine, originally from the "Sacred Beast" support theme, provides an alternative and powerful consistency boost. Dark Beckoning Beast, upon Normal Summon, can search for Opening of the Spirit Gates. The Continuous Spell can then search for Dark Beckoning Beast or another key piece, Chaos Summoning Beast, while also granting an additional Normal Summon of a Fiend monster with 0 ATK/DEF.4 This interaction can generate multiple monsters on the field from a single starter card.

### The Spell/Trap Support Suite: Facilitating Destruction and Fusion

The archetype's Spells and Traps are designed to give the player full control over their own destruction effects, a critical shift that underpins the deck's modern viability. Where the original strategy was passive and dependent on an opponent's actions, the new support provides proactive methods to trigger the Yubel monsters' powerful floating effects.1

* **Nightmare Throne:** This Field Spell is arguably the deck's best one-card starter. Upon activation, it allows the player to either add a Fiend monster with 0 ATK/DEF from the Deck to the hand or destroy it directly from the Deck.4 Its second, continuous effect is a powerful recursion tool: if a "Yubel" monster leaves the field by a card effect, you can add a "Yubel" monster with a Level 1 higher or lower from your Deck, GY, or banished zone to your hand and then Special Summon it, ignoring its summoning conditions.1
* **Nightmare Pain:** This Continuous Spell weaponizes the Yubel monsters. It forces an opponent's monsters to attack "Yubel" monsters and reflects any battle damage you would have taken back to the opponent.4 This effect is instrumental in protecting other key monsters on the endboard, such as Apollousa, Bow of the Goddess.9 For combo purposes, its most important effect is the ability to destroy a DARK monster in your hand or on your field to search for any card that mentions "Yubel".1
* **Eternal Favorite:** A Continuous Trap that offers both recursion and disruption. Once per turn, it can Special Summon a "Yubel" monster from the GY or banished pile. Its more potent effect allows it to be sent from the field to the GY while you control "Yubel" to Fusion Summon one Fusion Monster using monsters from either field as material, including a "Yubel" monster.4 This functions as a searchable, in-theme Super Polymerization that can dismantle an opponent's board during their turn.
* **Mature Chronicle:** A more specialized Continuous Spell that accumulates "Chronicle Counters" whenever a "Yubel" monster is Special Summoned. By removing five counters, it can search a copy of Super Polymerization from the Deck, providing another angle to access a powerful board-breaking card.4

### The Extra Deck Bosses: The True Win Conditions

The modern Yubel strategy leverages the Extra Deck for both its primary interruptions and its game-ending threats.

* **Phantom of Yubel:** This Fusion Monster is the single most impactful addition to the archetype. It is easily summoned without a Fusion Spell by shuffling one "Yubel" monster and one 0 ATK/DEF Fiend monster from the hand, field, or GY back into the Deck.4 Its Quick Effect is its most crucial feature: when an opponent activates a monster effect, you can Tribute Phantom of Yubel, and the opponent's effect becomes "Your opponent destroys 1 'Yubel' monster in their hand, Deck, or field".11 This powerful pseudo-negation turns an opponent's interruption, such as Ash Blossom & Joyous Spring or Nibiru, the Primal Being, into a trigger for your own engine, protecting your combos while simultaneously extending them.13
* **Yubel - The Loving Defender Forever:** This Level 12 Fusion Monster is the deck's primary Super Polymerization target. It requires one "Yubel" monster and one or more Effect Monsters on the field. It cannot be destroyed by battle or card effects and takes no battle damage. At the end of the Damage Step, if it battled an opponent's monster, it inflicts damage to the opponent equal to that monster's ATK and banishes it.4 This combination of board removal, burn damage, and near-total immunity makes it an exceptional tool for breaking established boards and finishing the game.

## The Consistency Web - Mapping Search and Summon Pathways

The hyper-consistency of the Yubel deck stems from a dense, interconnected network of search and Special Summon effects. Unlike decks with a single linear search path, Yubel's engine is a web where multiple cards can lead to the same outcome, and each step in a sequence often unlocks several further options. This redundancy makes the deck resilient to single points of disruption.

### Primary Searchers and Starters

The deck's opening plays are typically initiated by one of several powerful "one-card starters."

* **Nightmare Throne:** As the deck's Field Spell, it is searchable by Terraforming. Its activation effect provides a direct line to the deck's main starters, either by adding Samsara D Lotus to hand or by destroying Spirit of Yubel directly from the Deck to trigger its summon effect.1
* **Samsara D Lotus:** When Normal Summoned, it can Tribute itself to Special Summon Spirit of Yubel from the Deck, initiating the main combo line without any other cards required.2
* **Dark Beckoning Beast:** This monster acts as a starter for a sub-engine that generates multiple monsters. Its Normal Summon searches Opening of the Spirit Gates, which then provides an additional Normal Summon and can search another Fiend, effectively turning one card into two or three monsters on the field.9

### Mid-Combo Extenders and Searchers

Once the initial play has been made, a series of mid-combo searchers extend the sequence into a formidable board.

* **Spirit of Yubel:** Its on-summon effect is the central pivot of the combo. It can search Nightmare Pain to continue the self-destruction chain, Nightmare Throne to set up recursion, or Eternal Favorite to prepare a disruption for the opponent's turn.2
* **Nightmare Pain:** After being searched, its primary role is to destroy the Spirit of Yubel that summoned it. This action is not a cost but a value-generating play, as it simultaneously triggers Spirit of Yubel's floating effect while searching for a key extender like Gruesome Grave Squirmer.1
* **Unchained Soul Lord of Yama:** This Link Monster is the bridge to the Unchained engine. Upon being Link Summoned, its mandatory effect searches for Unchained Soul of Sharvara, the critical piece needed to access the powerful Unchained Link Monsters and Traps.1

The deck's search pathways are designed to generate an exponential increase in advantage. A single starter does not merely replace itself; it initiates a cascade of effects that results in multiple cards on the field and in hand. For example, activating Nightmare Throne can lead to a board of four monsters and an additional card in hand, all from that single initial investment.1 This explosive resource generation is what allows the deck to build such layered and resilient endboards.

The following table provides a visual map of the core search and summon pathways within the Yubel archetype, illustrating the flow of resources from starters to extenders.

| **Card** | **Effect Trigger** | **Searches / Summons** | **Target Location** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Nightmare Throne** | Activation | Add or Destroy 1 Fiend with 0 ATK/DEF | Deck |
|  | "Yubel" monster leaves field by effect | Add & Special Summon 1 "Yubel" monster (Level +/-1) | Deck, GY, or Banishment |
| **Samsara D Lotus** | Tribute (Ignition Effect) | Special Summon 1 "Yubel" monster | Deck |
| **Spirit of Yubel** | Special Summoned | Add or Set 1 Spell/Trap that mentions "Yubel" | Deck |
|  | Destroyed | Special Summon 1 "Yubel" monster | Deck, GY, Hand, or Banishment |
| **Nightmare Pain** | Destroy 1 DARK monster | Add 1 "Yubel" or card that mentions it | Deck |
| **Gruesome Grave Squirmer** | Banish from GY | Special Summon 1 Fiend with 0 ATK/DEF | Hand or GY |
| **Dark Beckoning Beast** | Normal Summon | Add 1 Opening of the Spirit Gates | Deck |
| **Opening of the Spirit Gates** | Activation | Add 1 Fiend with 0 ATK/DEF | Deck |
| **Unchained Soul Lord of Yama** | Link Summon | Add 1 "Unchained" monster | Deck |
| **Unchained Soul of Sharvara** | GY effect after being destroyed | Set 1 "Unchained" Spell/Trap | Deck |

## Executing the Game Plan - A Guide to Core Combo Lines

The Yubel deck is capable of numerous combo lines that adapt based on the starting hand. However, most variations converge on a similar strategic goal: establishing a board of multiple interruptions protected by the Yubel engine. The following are step-by-step guides to the most fundamental and powerful combo sequences.

### The One-Card Combo: Nightmare Throne

This is the deck's most efficient and common opening play, requiring only Nightmare Throne (or a card that can search it, like Terraforming) to build a full board.1

1. Activate Nightmare Throne. Use its on-activation effect to add Samsara D Lotus from your Deck to your hand.
2. Normal Summon Samsara D Lotus.
3. Activate the Ignition Effect of Samsara D Lotus, Tributing it to Special Summon Spirit of Yubel from your Deck.
4. Upon being Special Summoned, the effect of Spirit of Yubel triggers. Add Nightmare Pain from your Deck to your hand.
5. Activate Nightmare Pain. Use its effect, targeting and destroying the Spirit of Yubel on your field.
6. This action triggers three separate effects that can be placed on the chain. A common and effective chain link order is: Chain Link 1 (Nightmare Pain) to add Gruesome Grave Squirmer from your Deck to your hand; Chain Link 2 (Spirit of Yubel's GY effect) to Special Summon the original Yubel from your Deck; and Chain Link 3 (Nightmare Throne's field effect) to Special Summon Yubel - Terror Incarnate from your Deck.1
7. Resolving this chain results in Yubel, Yubel - Terror Incarnate, and Nightmare Pain on the field, with Gruesome Grave Squirmer in hand. This establishes the core Yubel presence and provides the materials to extend into other engines.

A crucial strategic decision at the start of any combo is whether to first summon Phantom of Yubel. Because it can be summoned by shuffling materials from the hand, a player with Spirit of Yubel and another 0/0 Fiend in their opening hand can immediately summon Phantom of Yubel before committing to any plays that are vulnerable to hand traps.14 This proactive play turns an opponent's Ash Blossom & Joyous Spring or Nibiru, the Primal Being into an advantage-generating trigger for the Yubel deck, making it an essential tactic for high-level play.12

### Extending with the Unchained Engine

From the board state established by the one-card combo, the Unchained engine provides access to powerful Link monsters and additional disruption.

1. (Continuing from the Nightmare Throne combo) Activate the effect of Gruesome Grave Squirmer in your hand to Special Summon it, as you control Fiend monsters.1
2. Immediately Link Summon Unchained Soul Lord of Yama using Yubel and Gruesome Grave Squirmer as materials.1
3. Upon summon, Yama's effect activates, allowing you to add Unchained Soul of Sharvara from your Deck to your hand.1
4. Activate the effect of Unchained Soul of Sharvara from your hand, targeting and destroying Yubel - Terror Incarnate on your field to Special Summon itself.1
5. This triggers multiple effects. Yubel - Terror Incarnate's effect will Special Summon Yubel - The Ultimate Nightmare. Simultaneously, Unchained Soul Lord of Yama's GY effect can be triggered by a Fiend being destroyed by a card effect, allowing you to revive a DARK Fiend monster (such as Spirit of Yubel).8
6. Using Sharvara and another monster (e.g., the revived Spirit of Yubel), Link Summon Unchained Soul of Rage. The GY effect of Sharvara will then activate, allowing you to Set an "Unchained" Spell/Trap, typically Abominable Chamber of the Unchained, directly from your Deck.1

### Integrating the Fiendsmith Engine

The Fiendsmith engine adds another layer of resilience and power, often operating without the need for a Normal Summon, which complements the Yubel starters perfectly.

1. (Assuming a hand with a Yubel starter and The Fiendsmith [Fiendsmith Engraver]) After establishing a basic board, use The Fiendsmith's effect by discarding it to search for Fiendsmith Tractus.7
2. Activate Fiendsmith Tractus, using its effect to add Fabled Lurrie to your hand and then immediately discard it. Fabled Lurrie's effect triggers in the GY, Special Summoning itself as an additional LIGHT Fiend monster on the field.7
3. These additional monsters facilitate Link climbing. For example, two LIGHT Fiends can be used to summon Fiendsmith Requiem, which can then Tribute itself to summon another The Fiendsmith from the Deck. This sequence generates the materials needed for powerful Link-4 monsters or the archetype's own boss, Fiendsmith's Desirae.7
4. Because the Fiendsmith line can be executed without a Normal Summon, it can be seamlessly combined with the Samsara D Lotus or Dark Beckoning Beast plays, leading to exceptionally powerful and varied endboards.21

## Symbiotic Destruction - Integration with External Engines

The Yubel archetype's core mechanic—benefiting from self-destruction—makes it a uniquely synergistic partner for other themes that utilize destruction as part of their own game plan. This has led to the development of powerful hybrid strategies, most notably with the Unchained and Fiendsmith archetypes. These are not merely instances of "splashing" a small engine; they represent the creation of a new, cohesive "Fiend Combo" strategy with Yubel as its central, advantage-generating hub.

### The Unchained Partnership: A Perfect Marriage of Destruction

The synergy between Yubel and Unchained is one of the most natural and potent in the modern game. The two archetypes are fundamentally complementary: Yubel monsters need to be destroyed to activate their most powerful effects, and Unchained monsters destroy your own cards as a means of generating advantage.16

* **Core Interaction:** An exemplary interaction is the effect of Unchained Soul of Sharvara. It can Special Summon itself from the hand by destroying another card you control. When targeting a Spirit of Yubel, this single action accomplishes two goals simultaneously: it triggers Spirit of Yubel's effect to float into another Yubel monster, and it places Sharvara on the field to be used as Link Material.1 This transforms what would be a cost for the Unchained archetype into a significant benefit for the Yubel engine.
* **Strategic Payoff:** This symbiotic relationship provides the Yubel deck with easy access to the Unchained Extra Deck monsters. Unchained Soul of Rage offers powerful disruption by allowing you to Link Summon using one of your opponent's monsters during their Main Phase. Unchained Abomination provides further non-targeting destruction, clearing problematic cards from the opponent's field.1

### The Fiendsmith Contract: Elevating Consistency and Power

The Fiendsmith engine, introduced in *The Infinite Forbidden*, provides the Yubel strategy with increased resilience, a higher power ceiling, and access to a different form of negation.

* **Core Interaction:** The primary strength of the Fiendsmith engine is its ability to generate multiple LIGHT Fiend monsters without relying on the deck's Normal Summon.7 Cards like The Fiendsmith and Fiendsmith Tractus create a resource loop that can be initiated from the hand, providing extra bodies for Link and Fusion Summons.20 This complements the Yubel starters like Samsara D Lotus and Dark Beckoning Beast, which do require a Normal Summon.
* **Strategic Payoff:** By integrating Fiendsmith, the deck gains access to Fiendsmith's Desirae, a powerful Fusion Monster that, when equipped with Fiendsmith Sequence, provides a formidable omni-negate.13 This adds a crucial layer of protection that the Yubel and Unchained engines do not inherently possess, creating a more well-rounded and difficult-to-break endboard. The Fiendsmith cards also enhance the deck's grind game, as The Fiendsmith can repeatedly revive itself from the GY.20

## The Endboard - Deconstructing the Fortress of Interruptions

A successful turn-one combo for the Yubel deck culminates in a multi-layered board of interruptions designed not only to stop the opponent's plays but also to out-resource them over subsequent turns. The board is not a brittle "glass cannon" but a resilient fortress with built-in recursion.

### Composition of a Standard Endboard

While the exact composition can vary based on the starting hand and chosen combo lines, a competitive Yubel endboard typically features a combination of the following disruptive elements 9:

* **Monster Negation:** Apollousa, Bow of the Goddess with two or three materials, providing multiple negations for opponent's monster effects.
* **Omni-Negation:** An omni-negate in the form of Varudras, the Final Bringer of the End Times (made with two Level 10 monsters like Spirit of Yubel and Yubel) or Fiendsmith's Desirae (from the Fiendsmith engine).
* **Advantage-Generating Interruption:** Phantom of Yubel, which serves as a pseudo-negate that turns an opponent's monster effect into a trigger for your own engine.
* **Targeted Removal and Disruption:** Unchained Soul of Rage, which can use an opponent's monster to Link Summon during their turn, or S:P Little Knight, providing non-destruction removal. Access to these is often guaranteed by a Set Abominable Chamber of the Unchained.
* **Board Control:** A face-up Nightmare Pain to force opponent's monsters to attack your indestructible Yubel monsters, thereby protecting Apollousa and other vulnerable pieces from battle.

### The Layers of Disruption

The strength of the Yubel endboard lies in how these interruptions are sequenced to maximize their impact and generate value.

1. **Layer 1 (Initial Monster Effect):** The first monster effect the opponent activates is ideally met with the tribute effect of Phantom of Yubel. This is the preferred opening move because it is not a true negation; it changes the effect, turning the opponent's play into a Special Summon of a Yubel monster from your Deck. This immediately puts the opponent at a card disadvantage while advancing your own board state.19
2. **Layer 2 (Critical Spell/Trap or Follow-up Monster):** If the opponent continues their plays, the omni-negate from Varudras or Desirae is used to stop their most critical card, be it a powerful Spell like Triple Tactics Talent or a key combo-starting monster effect that Phantom of Yubel could not address.
3. **Layer 3 (Multiple Monster Effects):** Apollousa, Bow of the Goddess is reserved to handle any subsequent monster effects the opponent may attempt to resolve. With Nightmare Pain on the field, Apollousa is protected from being destroyed by battle, forcing the opponent to deal with it via card effects.9
4. **Layer 4 (On-Field Threats):** Should the opponent successfully summon a problematic monster, Unchained Soul of Rage (revived by Abominable Chamber) or S:P Little Knight can be used to remove it from the field, often by using that same monster as Link Material for a disruptive Link Summon.

This layered approach is backed by a robust system of recursion. The GY will contain resources like Unchained Soul Lord of Yama, whose effect can revive a Fiend Link Monster if another card is destroyed, and Unchained Traps that can bring back monsters from the GY.8 Samsara D Lotus can also revive itself during the End Phase, providing an additional body and potential interruption for the next turn.4 This ensures that even if the opponent manages to break the initial board, the Yubel player has ample resources to rebuild and win a longer, attrition-based game.

## Strategic Considerations - Strengths, Weaknesses, and Counter-Play

The modern Yubel archetype has established itself as a top-tier contender in the competitive landscape due to its unique combination of consistency, resilience, and power. However, it is not without its vulnerabilities. Understanding both its strengths and its weaknesses is crucial for pilots and opponents alike.

### Overarching Strengths

* **Hyper-Consistency and Redundancy:** The deck boasts numerous one- and two-card combos that can all lead to a similarly powerful endboard. The interchangeability of starters like Nightmare Throne, Samsara D Lotus, and Dark Beckoning Beast means the deck can consistently execute its game plan.1
* **Resilience to Interruption:** The early summoning of Phantom of Yubel provides a powerful shield against common hand traps. By turning an opponent's disruption into a combo extender, the deck can often play through multiple points of interaction that would stop other combo decks.13
* **High Power Ceiling:** An uninterrupted Yubel combo can end on a board with five or more distinct interruptions, including monster negates, an omni-negate, and multiple forms of removal, making it exceedingly difficult for an opponent to play the game.14
* **Strong Grind Game:** Unlike many "glass cannon" combo decks, Yubel excels in longer duels. Its extensive use of the Graveyard and the recursive nature of the Unchained and Fiendsmith engines allow it to rebuild its board turn after turn, eventually out-resourcing the opponent.21

### Key Weaknesses and Choke Points

Despite its strengths, the Yubel strategy has several clear points of failure that a knowledgeable opponent can exploit.

* **Dependency on the Backrow:** The deck relies heavily on its Continuous and Field Spells, particularly Nightmare Pain and Nightmare Throne, to function. Mass Spell/Trap removal cards like Harpie's Feather Duster, Lightning Storm, or Evenly Matched can cripple the deck's engine and leave its monsters vulnerable.29
* **Vulnerability to Non-Destruction Removal:** The core Yubel engine relies on its monsters being destroyed by card effects to trigger their floating abilities. Effects that banish (Bystial monsters), return to the hand (Compulsory Evacuation Device), or send to the GY as cost are highly effective, as they bypass these triggers entirely.10
* **Susceptibility to Floodgates:** Certain floodgate cards can completely shut down the deck's strategy. Skill Drain negates all monster effects on the field, Abyss Dweller prevents the activation of crucial GY effects, and cards that prevent Special Summoning (Summon Limit) or lock players into a specific Attribute (Gozen Match) can be devastating.32
* **Identifiable Choke Points:** While the deck is resilient, it is not invincible. The most effective points to use a hand trap are often on the initial Normal Summon of Samsara D Lotus or Dark Beckoning Beast. Negating the on-summon search effect of Unchained Soul Lord of Yama can also be effective, as it cuts off access to the entire Unchained follow-up.13 Droll & Lock Bird, if activated after the deck's first search, can halt the combo entirely.10

Ultimately, one of the deck's most significant weaknesses is its own complexity. The combo lines are long, intricate, and require constant adaptation based on the opponent's interruptions. An inexperienced player who has only memorized a single combo line may find their entire strategy collapsing after a single, well-timed disruption. Conversely, a skilled pilot who understands the deck's myriad branching paths can navigate through multiple interruptions to still establish a threatening board.21 This high skill ceiling means that an opponent's deep understanding of the Yubel deck's decision trees can be one of the most effective counters, allowing them to force the Yubel player into suboptimal lines of play.

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