Curse of Sekh
By Clare

Note: This story takes place just prior to the events of ***Thundercats Ho!***

Prologue

It was another typical day on Third Earth and the Black Pyramid was no exception. Once again, as he had done so often in the past, Mumm-Ra stood at his cauldron, his twisted mind focussed solely on coming up with a plan that would get those infernal Thundercats out of his life once and for all. True, everything he had tried so far - imprisoning them in the Pyramid, mind-control, even using his shapeshifting powers to pass himself off as a Thunderian - had backfired on him, but he was sure the solution to those feline thorns in the side was out there . . . somewhere.

"Ancient Spirits of Evil!" he intoned, raising his almost equally ancient arms in a gesture of evocation. "Come to the aid of Mumm-Ra! Show me the means to rid Third Earth of the Thundercats . . ." He paused at this point to let loose a brief evil cackle. " . . . forever!"

The clouds issuing from the cauldron glowed a brilliant red as the Ancient Spirits of Evil prepared to give their answer. Finally, after a few seconds had elapsed, a disembodied voice echoed through the chamber telling Mumm-Ra what he must do, that there was one spell that might work - the Curse of Sekh.

"But it will be difficult - and dangerous," the Spirits warned. "Before you cast it, you must assemble the following ingredients . . ."

Mumm-Ra leaned forward, eager to hear what he would be required to do in order to bring down the Curse of Sekh upon the Thundercats.

"A Wollo bracelet," the Spirits intoned as Mumm-Ra made a mental note to use this as a excuse to send the Mutants on a raid of the Wollo village.

"Good - anything else?"

"The second ingredient," the disembodied voice of the Spirits stated, "is the venom from a rare Golden Cobra."

Mumm-Ra noted this as well, grateful that he just happened to have a stash of Golden Cobra venom in his Pyramid, and began formulating plans for the rule of Darkness he would impose on Third Earth once he was finally rid of the Thundercats. But the Ancients Spirits of Evil were not through yet; there were still three more ingredients to be gathered before the Curse could be evoked.

"The third and fourth ingredients," the Spirits went on, "are water from the River of Despair and the tail hair from a unicorn . . ."

"All right, I get the idea!" Mumm-Ra snapped impatiently. "Then what do I do?"

"Bring the items here," replied the Spirits as the flames in Mumm-Ra's cauldron danced evilly. "But that will not be all - the fifth ingredient is the most vital of all. Without it, the Curse has no power."

"And what is the fifth ingredient?" Mumm-Ra demanded, feeling rather like he had the day he tried to free the sorceress Princess Ta-She from the Timewarp that had been her prison for millenia. For a brief moment, he believed he had succeeded, but those infernal Thundercats had shown up and ruined everything. It also turned out that Ta-She's Doomgaze, while capable of entrancing any male who looked her in the eye, had a major weakness - it didn't work on females.

Dismissing Ta-She from his mind, Mumm-Ra listened as the Ancient Spirits of Evil announced the fifth ingredient, the one that would make all the difference when he came to call down the Curse. "You must optain a drop of blood from a young female," they told him. "Capture the Thundercat girl named Wilykit and bring her here. Then, once all the other ingredients are in your cauldron, you must prick her finger and let the blood fall into the mixture. Afterwards, you may do what you like with her."

Mumm-Ra cackled evilly - he would do what he liked with Wilykit all right. In fact, he would do what he liked with all the Thundercats once the Curse of Sekh was unleashed. He found himself wondering what exactly it would do - he recalled hearing of the Curse back in the days on First Earth when he was training to be a sorceror, before the Ancient Spirits of Evil had corrupted him and turned him into the demonic figure he was now, but it hadn't been evoked for so long that none could remember what effect it had. Death? Mumm-Ra hoped so; ever since the Thundercats turned up on Third Earth, he had been looking for ways to crush them and it now looked like he would be able to do that with one fell swoop. Darkness? That would be even better - Third Earth plunged into eternal darkness with all its inhabitants living only to serve him.

He could already picture it: all the Warrior Maidens, Wollos, Bolkins and other insignificant races bonded to him as slaves for all eternity, the Mutants as his generals and himself at the top of the pile. Yes, life would be good with the Thundercats out of the way, he mused as he stood in the darkness of his Pyramid. In fact, he might even be able to achieve what he had so far failed to achieve, the destruction of the Eye of Thundera.

Possessing the Eye had been his dream since long before the Thundercats came, bringing with them their mystical Sword of Omens with the Eye of Thundera embedded in the hilt. But, after learning that the Sword could never be used for evil, he had been forced to change tactics and attempt instead to destroy the Eye's powers. Now, once the Curse of Sekh had taken care of those meddling Thundercats, he would finally have the chance to do just that - use ancient sorceries to put an end to the very symbol of the Thundercats' power. He knew from past experience that the Eye of Thundera was powerful, but everything had a weak spot, some kind of Achilles heel . . .

Soon, Mumm-Ra told himself, soon all of Third Earth would be under his command and the Thundercats would be nothing more than a bad memory. But, before he could hope to achieve

those goals, he had to obtain the items needed in order to invoke the Curse of Sekh. And, to do that, he needed help from his allies from Plundarr - the Mutants were a considerable source of annoyance at times with their never-ending list of failures and incompetent bungling, but there were times when having them as minions was extremely useful.

Elsewhere on Third Earth, life went on as it usually did, with the many races that inhabited the planet going about their daily lives in the morning sun. The weather was sunny and warm, with only a few wispy clouds visible in the sky and many felt sure that today would be a good one. After the Thundercats and the Mutants arrived, Third Earth's native inhabitants had quickly found themselves caught up in the war between the two races and, although each tribe had allied itself with one of the two warring factions, that was the last thing on anyone's mind today. This was going to be a day that nothing could spoil.

Little did anyone suspect what Mumm-Ra planned to do. Little did they know that the Curse Of Sekh could soon threaten everything they cherished.

Before nightfall, all on Third Earth would be drawn into a life-or-death struggle to stop the evil that would shortly be unleashed . . .