

Twilight Sparkle, Princess of (Dis-)Harmony?

(Translated by Tom S. Fox, original here:

<http://www.fantasymagazine.it/notizie/18520/twilight-sparkle-principessa-della-dis-armonia/>)

A few days ago, Hasbro and the cable channel The Hub announced their plans for the season finale of *My Little Pony Friendship is Magic*. As seems to have become a habit since *A Canterlot Wedding*, where the American toy giant organized a fictitious reception for the wedding-themed episode, there is another big event planned for this year's finale: the *My Little Pony Coronation Concert Sweepstakes*, which will be held February 9 in Los Angeles, Las Vegas, and New York (Brooklyn), a charity concert performed before the airing of the episode; the proceeds go to the Children Hospital of Los Angeles. Guests of the event will be Miss America 2013 Mallory Hagan and Olympic-gold-winning gymnast Carmelita Jeter.

Tickets will be given away by various participating Internet sites, among them the special page arranged for the occasion on The Hub's Web site (active beginning February 1 and available at www.hubworld.com/MLPprincess). Apart from the event, the toys from the new toy line have also been presented, available soon in American stores.

In this last episode, titled *Magical Mystery Cure*, scheduled for February 16, 2013, Twilight Sparkle accidentally casts a spell that mixes up the cutie marks (the symbols on the ponies' flanks) and corresponding destinies of her friends. She only has one way to fix the disaster: writing her own magic. But by doing this, she will, without realizing it, also fulfill her own destiny: becoming a princess.

Princesses (also known as alicorns within the fandom) are a special race of winged unicorns who often have leadership roles within pony society: Luna and Celestia, the rulers of Equestria, are the two best-known princesses. As head writer Meghan McCarthy explains, being a princess means "being a good pony who shares the gifts that they have been given with others. We're building a very unique mythology around being a princess. Every little girl wants to be a princess, and not everybody can get to be a princess — but you can live up to the ideals that should come along with being a princess." Meghan also assures us that, "[we don't want to] change who she [Twilight Sparkle] is as a character, because she's certainly someone that everyone's proud to know and love. I don't think becoming a princess really changes her; I think it's going to introduce some new challenges for her." As for the episode's plot, she reveals to us, "[Twilight] was set up from the very beginning to be on an important journey. It's really about her earning this new status by combining all the things that we've seen her learn over the course of the series."

However, these news displease a portion of the brony fandom, the most die-hard crowd of adult

fans of the animated series, which has set off a heated argument about the change of the most beloved unicorn of recent times. Angry comments have rained down on forums and blogs of fan groups, maintaining that, in a nutshell, this change will be the show's downfall, all because of Hasbro, who have imposed a bridle (so to speak) on the writers, solely for the sinister, capitalistic goal of selling more toys; fierce criticism followed very quickly in the form of satirical fan art on the issue. Another part of the fandom, however, displays complete trust in the creative team's ability to perform the alteration: This being a show born to advertise products, it has already frequently happened that places or characters used in the toy line have been inserted (like Princess Cadance and the Crystal Empire), and despite this the writers have been able to give us excellent episodes; we can therefore count on the artistic abilities of talented people who have proven several times that they can successfully face this challenge. In short, a downright verbal confrontation about a controversial episode that won't even air until the middle of February.

When interviewed by the site entertainmentweekly.com, Shaun Scotellaro, also known as Sethisto, manager of the most famous and most followed blog of the brony fandom, *Equestria Daily*, explained that the reasons for the panic stem from the deep fondness that all fans have for the protagonist, Twilight Sparkle. "I think the main thing is that it's happening to a character so many people connect to. Twilight Sparkle, she's more of a nerd. She's like all of us, that geeky nerd who reads books and gets all excited about stupid stuff." A character, then, that fans feel very connected to and fear will be destroyed by this radical change.

All fans are aware that the transformation of the sweet, intelligent purple unicorn will have a deep impact on the show; whether this is a good thing or a bad thing we won't know until season 4.