



Reaching the halfway point of *Cyberteam in Akihabara* sees us finally get some information about what's been going on behind the scenes - although I hope you've got an open mind if you want to make sense of it all. Or, you could just roll your eyes and give up. Read on to find out which way  
*I'm* tempted to go...

### 11 - Red Shoes

Hibari's search for her prince continues, and Susume, Tsugumi and Kamome have been helping her out by gathering photos of all the boys at the school - after all, Hibari's convinced he's one of the students there, so he's bound to appear *somewhere* in their big pile of photographs. Although their "help" does come with a charge attached. On her way home that afternoon, though, Hibari meets a boy who may just be her prince, and who offers her a lift home so she can avoid the rain. Her prince, though, turns out to be none other than Shooting Star...



### 12 - Black Diva

Flashback: to the aftermath of a battle, with Shooting Star viewing the carnage and lamenting the destruction that humanity is able to create. But this is a battle during the First World War, which makes you wonder how he can still be around *now*. Back in the present day, another girl is heading to Japan, her mind filled with images of that battle and a Pata-Pi by her side - is she going to be more trouble for the Cyberteam to deal with? Hibari can't really be thinking of trouble, though - she's still trying to get over learning that her prince is their greatest enemy. Which means that when Shooting Star's newly-powered-up trio of warriors attack, she's not there to help her friends...



### 13 - Tsubame

Shooting Star seems to be falling out of favour with his boss, as things just aren't going their way. The Principal is hoping that the arrival of a new anima mundi - Tsubame - will turn things around and get their plans back on track, though. While Hibari continues to hide out in her room, the other Cyberteam members are wondering who it was that saved them during their last battle: a black Diva that they hadn't seen before, which suggests that there's another possible member for the Cyberteam nearby. But who? Tsubame, meanwhile, has joined the same school as Hibari and the others - and it's not long before she's causing problems...



#### 14 - *The Light of Days Gone By*

The arrival on the scene of Tsubame's Diva has thrown the girls into disarray - yes, she started by defeating the ladies, but she then turned on Hibari and the others, leaving them wondering whose side she's really on. Four against one doesn't seem the best odds to pick a fight with, either, but you get the distinct impression that she's still likely to win the fight. While the girls fight, back at the school the Principal and his guests are reminiscing about things far past - things that no human still alive should have lived through. It seems that events in Akihabara are leading to the culmination of a plan that has been in motion for many, many years...



So far, I've had two main problems with *Cyberteam* - the lack of apparent threat to the girls, and the way that the series simply didn't make any sense - and I'm happy to say that both of them get addressed during this volume, although with different amounts of success. Looking at that lack of threat, it's made clear during these episode that that's actually *deliberate*

- Shooting Star at several points ends up in trouble for pushing them too far, for powering up his own trio of ladies to the point where they can defeat the Divas, as that's not what the Bad Guys™ want at this stage in their plan. Instead, the girls are being *trained*

- put in situations that will teach them how to properly use their Divas, so they can handle whatever it is that Shooting Star and the school principal have planned for them down the line. That revelation actually left me even more annoyed at the series than I had been, as it just says to me that we've wasted thirteen episodes on setup that wasn't really necessary. Thanks for that: can I make a claim for those lost hours of my life back?

On the plus side, the final episode here kicks heavily into flashback mode, explaining events going back a hundred years (and featuring characters drawn from legend that are even older than that) that flow into the plans that are now afoot to change the world. The way it's presented gives you no indication as to what the *outcome* of those plans will be, in terms of good or bad, you have to assume from the demeanour and attitude of the two leaders of the plotting that it's not going to be good. As ever with this series, though, it's all left vague enough - and sprinkled with far too much bullshit dialogue - that you could interpret it in any number of ways. Sometimes that can be a good thing, where a show's characters or settings are appealing enough to encourage you to make that effort. Unfortunately, *Cyberteam*

just doesn't seem to be capable of creating that level of enthusiasm, so you get stuck with a story that's clearly expecting you do draw your own conclusions before it bothers to explain

everything, but no inclination to do so.

Instead, you'll probably just find yourself wishing the whole thing was over. Even the trio of Blood Falcon, Death Crow and Dark Pigeon have gone from being the interesting characters that were developed last volume into caricatures that just appear to fill the spaces in their new powered suits, and are shadows of their former selves.

One other thing I noticed with this volume: the packaging for the first two volumes of the series emphasised the magical girl aspect of the show, with images of Hibari and co in their school gear and a fluffy feel to them. This volume, though, sees the emphasis changed to the Divas - "Look!", it says, "This is a serious mecha / combat show!", and the front cover plastered with several quotes singing the show's praises. I can only think that the authors of those quotes were watching something else - and it also points out that the show was struggling to find an audience. The more I see of the series, the more I understand why. Half-way through, I still have to say that *Cyberteam* really isn't worth the effort, and is showing very little sign that the second half of the series will change that.

