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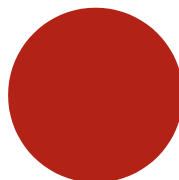
A Critical Analysis of Biased Representations of Women in South Korean Rap Competitions

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Abstract

This thesis aimed to unpack the representation and characterization of women in South Korean rap competition shows and how it transformed itself throughout the years. So, the three competitions, from 2013 to 2022, were reviewed and analyzed in order to understand how woman were generally represented and perceived while participating.

These shows combined television and music with the public's opinion through different voting systems; if well liked, the career of a female contestant could be jumpstarted with just one appearance. Whether the show was running or after it had finished, some of the male contestants were usually offered more opportunities that assisted in expanding their careers into the vast space of multimedia, from invitations to podcasts, to appearances at other shows or even in the cinema. Through the research the same could only be seen from a handful of women, especially those which already had a career, a contract, or connections to other rappers, which were usually male rappers. But being on these shows didn't always open a door, sometimes it closed all doors; this was the case of quite a few of the contestants in *Unpretty Rapstar*, whom after appearing on the show did nothing else in the entertainment industry.

Through content analysis, this research also described all instances of female contestants participating, in them there were faced double standards, tokenism, and systemic obstacles that impeded their success and recognition. Moreover, it examined the role of the media and the male contestants in perpetuating and amplifying gender biases within the context of the shows.

In Korean Hip-Hop, much like in its American origins, women are not only rappers but also one of the main topics for male rappers to explore, shaped by the culture that surrounds them, which can be seen in the songs from these shows. By analyzing each one of the songs, both their lyrics and the rappers behind them, this research has determined that while there are quite a few songs that negatively represent women, there were also a lot in the opposite side of the spectrum, that represented women positively, especially those that mentioned motherly figures.

Keywords: Women's Representation, Female Rappers, South Korea, Rap Competitions, Korean Hip-Hop, Gender Studies

Resumo

Esta tese teve como objetivo desvendar a representação e caracterização das mulheres em competições de rap sul-coreanas e como se transformou ao longo dos anos. Portanto, as três competições, de 2013 a 2023, foram revistas e analisadas a fim de compreender como as mulheres eram geralmente representadas e compreendidas durante a participação.

Estes programas combinavam televisão e música com a opinião do público através de diferentes sistemas de votação; se bem recebida pelo público, a carreira de uma concorrente feminina pode ser elevada com apenas uma aparição. Quer o programa estivesse a decorrer ou depois de ter terminado, alguns dos concorrentes masculinos recebiam geralmente mais oportunidades que ajudaram a expandir as suas carreiras para o vasto espaço multimédia, desde convites a podcasts, a aparições noutros programas ou mesmo no cinema. Através da pesquisa, o mesmo só pôde ser visto em um pequeno grupo de mulheres, especialmente aquelas que já tinham uma carreira, um contrato ou conexões com outros rappers, por norma rappers masculinos. Mas estar nesses programas nem sempre abria uma porta, às vezes fechava todas as portas; este foi o caso de muitas das concorrentes de *Unpretty Rapstar*, que depois de aparecerem no programa não fizeram mais nada na indústria do entretenimento.

Através da análise de conteúdo, esta pesquisa também descreveu todos os casos de concorrentes do sexo feminino participantes, neles foram encontrados casos de padrões duplos, tokenismo e obstáculos sistêmicos que impediram sucesso e reconhecimento. Além disso, este papel examinou os media e dos concorrentes masculinos na perpetuação e amplificação dos preconceitos de género no contexto dos programas.

No Hip-Hop Coreano, assim como nas suas origens americanas, as mulheres não são apenas rappers, mas também um dos principais temas para os rappers masculinos explorarem, moldado pela cultura que as rodeia, o que pode ser visto nas músicas desses shows. Ao analisar cada uma das canções, tanto as suas letras como os rappers por trás delas, esta pesquisa determinou que, embora existam algumas canções que representam negativamente as mulheres, também havia muitas no lado oposto do espectro, que representavam as mulheres positivamente, especialmente aquelas que mencionam figuras maternas.

Palavras-Chave: Representação das mulheres, Mulheres Rappers, Coreia do Sul, Competições de Rap, Hip-Hop Coreano, Estudos de Género

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Abbreviations and Symbols

MNET	Music Network
KBS	Korean Broadcasting System
KHH	Korean Hip Hop
K-Pop	Korean Pop
K-R&B	Korean Rhythm and Blues
SMTM	Show Me the Money
HSR	High School Rapper

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The concept of reality shows is almost as old as television itself; *Candid Camera* was argued to be the first show of the genre ([Clissold, 2004](#)); however, even months before *Candid Camera*, *The Original Amateur Hour*, a reality singing competition, moved from radio to TV, debuting in January of 1948. The reality competition genre's most important factor for success is engagement with the audience, which could range from watching to voting or attending live events ([Hill, 2017](#)).

Across the sea, South Korea would only have their first reality singing competition in 1980; *Korea Sings*, also known as *National Singing Contest*, currently holds the title of longest-running South Korean TV program, airing every Sunday on KBS, the country's national broadcaster. Even so, *Korea Sings* mainly focuses on traditional South Korean music like Trot or Pansory, which attracts an older audience ([Kim, 2015](#)), leaving room for other shows guided towards younger audiences; that is where MNET came into play. MNET is a premium television music channel, focusing on South Korean popular music, commonly referred to as K-Pop. In 2009 they debuted one of the most famous South Korean music "survival shows", - which is how the country refers to music competitions - *Superstar K*, which would become a great success. Its success would ignite many more successful shows like it because much like music critic Seo Jeong Min-gap told The Korea Times, people were addicted to these shows as they pitted people against each other, that is what made them attractive ([Dong, 2021](#)).

The creation of new K-Pop survival shows would eventually test the grounds of Korean Hip Hop, which had been the music genre used by the first K-Pop group, Seo Taiji and Boys; three shows would come from this:

Show Me the Money - This is one of the most popular rap competitions in South Korea and has been running since 2012, airing a new season each year; at the time of this thesis, its latest season was *Show Me the Money 11* in 2022. The competition features a series of battles between aspiring rappers, opening its auditions to anyone, and the winner is decided based on their rapping skills, songwriting abilities, and stage presence. The producers, usually called judges in shows like *American Idol*, are divided into teams to serve as collaborators and music producers after the contestants choose which team they want to be on.

Unpretty Rapstar - This female-only rap competition; has three seasons, two in 2015 and one in 2016. Unlike *Show Me the Money*, this competition features already somewhat established female rappers battling it out in a series of rounds. The winner is decided based on their rapping skills and stage presence.

High School Rapper - This is a competition for high school students interested in rapping. The competition has been running since 2017; it airs and functions similarly to *Show Me The Money*; however, it had no season in 2022.

These rap competitions have helped to launch the careers of many successful South Korean rappers and have become an integral part of the music industry in South Korea. Nonetheless, they have also been quite hurtful to women; *Show Me the Money* has been the main topic of discussion and criticism. The show places too much emphasis on male rappers and does not give equal attention or opportunities to female contestants. Additionally, there have been instances where male contestants have made sexist comments, such as MINO in *Show Me The Money 3*, who made a suggestive comment about a woman visiting a gynecologist ([Pleasance, 2015](#)). Not all contestants on the show have had negative experiences; however, the criticisms mentioned above highlight the need for greater gender equality.

With *Show Me the Money* focusing more on the looks of female contestants than their skills, it was no surprise when the backlash ended up in the making of the female-only spin-off *Unpretty Rapstar* ([Lee, 2015](#)), be that as it may, the new show still faced criticism for promoting girl-on-girl hate and fostering a hostile, competitive atmosphere among the female contestants. Naturally, in a competitive environment, it is easy for tensions to run high and for individuals to become focused on winning at all costs; nevertheless, it is essential to remember that this kind of behavior only serves to perpetuate harmful gender stereotypes and undermines the efforts to promote gender equality.

The behavior displayed on *Unpretty Rapstar* sent a harmful message to young women and girls, suggesting that success can only be achieved through tearing others down rather than

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through collaboration and mutual support, promoting the idea that women can be friends (Hodoyan-Gastelum, 2015), and so, while *Unpretty Rapstar* had the potential to be a positive platform for female rappers, it ultimately fell short in terms of fostering a positive and empowering atmosphere for its contestants.

Lastly, there is *High School Rapper*, unlike *Show Me the Money*; this show started off with a somewhat balanced effort to promote a better representation of female contestants. The fact that *High School Rapper's* contestants were high schoolers meant that they could focus mainly on showcasing female rappers' talents and abilities without snide remarks about their appearance. However, as the season's progressed, it saw a decrease in female contestants; after Lee Young-ji's win in *High School Rapper 3*, the show expected more girls to participate, but as producer Choi Hyu-jin states, they simply could not choose any to join the show for *High School Rapper 4* (Yoon, 2021), which is the latest season to date, airing in 2021.

Compared to the shows that came before it, *High School Rapper* is the only one that stands out for its positive representation of its female contestants, even if it was somewhat due to the contestants' age. The show provided a much-needed platform for young and upcoming female rappers to showcase their skills and break through the gender barriers in the Hip Hop industry.

1.2 Problems, Hypothesis and Objectives of the Investigation

The representation of women participating, or as a subject, in South Korean rap competitions has been a topic of criticism in recent years. Some of the main issues include:

1. **Sexualization and objectification:** The women in these rap competitions were often portrayed in a sexualized and objectifying manner, reducing them to their physical appearance rather than focusing on their talent or skills as rappers, the most egregious culprit of this is *Show Me the Money*.
2. **Lack of representation:** Women are often underrepresented; in the case of SMTM and HSR, there are few female participants that get past the first rounds, fewer into the live shows, and in each show so far, only one woman has won, both times being Lee Young-ji. This reinforces the notion that rap is a male-dominated genre, making it harder for female rappers to gain recognition and respect in the industry.

3. **Stereotyping:** Women are often subject to gender-based stereotypes and expectations; this is a problem clearly portrayed through *Unpretty Rapstar*, where women are expected to lie and be mean to each other, with no sense of friendship. Their rap can't be too cute, or it will be ridiculed, but they also can't be too serious, or it will be ignored; there seems to be a fine line between what women are allowed to rap like and about, further limiting their artistic expression and opportunities for success.
4. **Bias and discrimination:** From the moment they enter these shows, women often face biases and discrimination based on their gender, with male judges and audiences being more likely to view female rappers as less skilled or talented than male rappers.

The goal of this investigation was to understand the level of gender equality of these shows, specifically in terms of female representation and participation. This research also provided insights into the challenges and obstacles that women faced, identifying potential areas for improvement, and making recommendations for increasing gender diversity and inclusivity in these survival shows.

Moreover, this research also serves as a lens through which to examine the South Korean societal attitudes towards women in multimedia, since it covers both series and music, particularly in the Hip-Hop genre, and contributes to ongoing debates and discussions around gender equity in the arts. The research can also provide valuable information for female rappers, music industry professionals, and cultural critics on the state of the industry and its potential for growth and development.

1.3 Research Questions and Methods

The main objective of this thesis is to understand the following two questions, all falling within the subject which is South Korean rap survival shows; they are the basis of this study:

1. How have women been depicted as both judges and contestants in these competitions?
2. How do male rappers describe and characterize women in the lyrics of the songs?

To answer these questions, we must investigate the three main rap competition shows, *Show Me the Money*, *Unpretty Rapstar*, and *High School Rapper*, to better understand how they have treated women by analyzing the lyrics, visuals, and performances of female contestants. The

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media coverage of these competitions and the language used to describe the women involved will also be analyzed.

Alongside the series itself, the songs made by male rappers will be looked into to determine how they portrayed women and the connotations behind such mentions.

1.4 The Researcher

I am a woman. I was born and raised in Portugal, to a Caucasian Portuguese-Brazilian family. When I started watching *Show Me the Money*, I quickly noticed the lack of female representation, which would eventually turn into my topic of research.

It is important to note, that I do realize that this work might hold my point of view as a Caucasian European woman, who has never visited Asia. Nonetheless, in the investigation I will try to be non-biased and gain a deeper understand of the social construct in South Korea.

I was introduced to K-Pop in 2012, much like most people. However, at this point it is hard for me to define whether I listened to Bigbang or Psy first; what isn't hard to define is that I loved Bigbang, a South Korean K-Pop group, consisting of five members. Not so much Psy, even though I find that he is a great musician.

Until 2015, I only expanded my knowledge of K-Pop within YG entertainment, the company Bigbang was under. I wasn't too into the fandom side of the situation, and aside from recommendations on YouTube, I paid no attention to other groups. Until I met two people who shared a similar interest in K-Pop, but for different groups.

With the two by my side, I expanded my knowledge of the South Korean entertainment industry. Not only did I look into more South Korean music, but I also looked at television series, movies, and manhwa. Fully immersing myself in the Hallyu Wave.

In 2017, I watched *Show Me the Money* for the first time, as season 8 launched. Me and my friends loved it so much that we decided to binge-watch all the seasons. Eventually, watching SMTM became a yearly event.

However, at first, I did not watch *Unpretty Rapstar* or *High School Rapper*. I wasn't a fan of any women in *Unpretty Rapstar*, and with HSR's contestants being young students, it didn't really seem interesting. Despite that, the three programs were mentioned several times in SMTM.

Eventually I gave in, and watched HSR4, since my friend, who lived with me at the time, wanted to watch it. I found this season to be the best season I had seen so far; not just counting SMTM, but also other “*idol*” competitions. HSR4 had no drama and was very supportive of its contestants, but it did have outlying problem, no female contestants.

As the series stacked up, and the more I watched, the more I kept seeing this problem. A problem that hadn't been properly addressed since the cancellation of *Unpretty Rapstar*. The lack of women in South Korean rapping competitions, and so I wanted to research it.

Throughout the years, I had gained some knowledge of the Korean language, and hangul, unfortunately, I never fully studied it, which could have been a problem, since MNET, the television company that owns these series does not offer official translations. Luckily, fans from South Korea and international fans have gathered to help translate the series, so they can reach a wider audience. Some translations were made with a group of around thirty people, who review and revise before releasing the subtitles. This work will use both those translations and my own translation in case there seems to be discrepancies with what is written.

2. Literary Review

2.1 Introduction

The global popularity of rap and Hip-Hop has skyrocketed since the 1990s. However, unlike other musical genres, when one thinks of the genre most artists that pop to mind are Black men, which provides a platform for expression that has historically been denied to them. Black women remain underrepresented in Hip-Hop, and those who do break into the industry face challenges, such as misogyny ([Weitzer & Kubrin, 2009](#)).

Across the ocean, in South Korea, something similar is happening; due to gender inequality and discrimination in the country, it is harder for women to gain their own space in the Hip Hop industry ([Ahn, 2022](#)). Not only do these women face those issues, but they are also in a double bind, where if they want a spot in the South Korean rap industry, they must navigate not only through the fact it is male-dominated but the fact there's high societal expectations of femininity and traditional gender roles, topics of which female rappers themselves have tried to speak out about ([Herman, 2022](#)).

2.2 African American Rap Influence in South Korean Rap

African American rap has had a significant influence on South Korean rap music. The genre of Hip-Hop originated in the Bronx, United States, in the 1970s, and its influence has since spread globally, including in South Korea. South Korean rappers have incorporated elements of African American rap into their own music, such as flow, rhythm, and rhyme patterns. Additionally, many South Korean rappers have been influenced by the socially conscious and politically charged lyrics found in African American rap, using their own music to address similar themes and issues in South Korean society ([Um, 2013](#)).

One of the most notable examples of African American rap influence is in South Korean trap, which, aside from its use in Korean Hip-Hop, has been quite successfully incorporated by K-Pop artists since the second generation of idols ([Ryan, 2022](#)), another example is the popularity of Hip-Hop crews in South Korea. Hip-Hop crews are groups of rappers and artists who come together to create and perform music, often collaborating on albums and live shows, in South Korea, its beginnings are often attributed to Tiger JK and the creation of Manifest Crew, a community which would give way to famous groups like Dynamic Duo, Leesang and Epik High, with their music often incorporating elements of African American rap and freestyle rapping ([Fendler, 2021](#)).

Rap reflects the culture, society, and experiences of the people who created it. So, while African American rap has had a significant influence on South Korean rap, Korean rap would end up shaping itself around its unique cultural context and experience ([Fendler, 2021](#)). For example, South Korean rappers often address themes and issues specific to South Korean society, such as consumerism, materialism, and the pressure to conform to societal expectations; they also incorporate elements of traditional Korean music and culture into their music, giving it a unique sound that is distinct from African American rap ([Lopez-Rogina, 2017](#)).

Additionally, the way that rap is consumed and appreciated in both countries is also shaped by their cultures; for example, South Korean rap has a large and passionate fanbase, mainly stemming from the way their music industry is conducted, usually making Korean Hip-Hop a secondary component in K-Pop; nonetheless, the genre gained mainstream popularity in recent years, with many rappers going from the “underground” into the mainstream industry to enjoy commercial success and recognition ([Vivien, 2021](#)).

Last but not least, African American Hip Hop has influenced the development of K-Pop, from the beats and lyrics to fashion, hairstyles, performances, music videos, and choreography, and now K-Pop has, in turn, modified the general perception of South Korean popular culture, with K-R&B, KHH and K-Pop artists collaborating with Americans the importance of Hip-Hop has become even more obvious ([Parker, 2015](#)).

2.3 South Korean Rap Industry

The South Korean rap industry, also known as Korean Hip-Hop, has seen significant growth in popularity in recent years; the mixing of the genre with K-Pop has attracted both domestic and international audiences.

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Korean Hip-Hop has its roots in the 1990s, but it wasn't until the early 2010s that the genre started to gain mainstream attention, with one of the key factors behind the growth of KHH being the popularity of the South Korean TV survival competition *Show Me the Money* ([Woo-young, 2016](#)), which showcased the talents of up-and-coming rappers, proved the worth of old school rappers and helped to bring the genre into the public's eye ([Vivien, 2021](#)).

Since then, many talented artists have emerged in the Korean Hip-Hop scene, including Bobby, Crush, Epik High, CL, Jay Park, and Zico, just to name a few, these artists have not only gained popularity in South Korea but have also made a name for themselves internationally, collaborating with artists from around the world, having world tours and performing at major music festivals ([Jenkins, 2022](#)). In recent years, the South Korean government has also shown support for the rap industry by providing support for education, industry development, and investing in the creation of music-related infrastructures, such as recording studios and concert venues (["U.S. Commercial Service," 2022](#)), this has helped to create a more supportive environment for KHH artists, allowing them to produce and perform their music to a wider audience.

The South Korean rap industry continues to grow and evolve, always changing its inner working to match the cultural shift that surrounds it; the following list is the crucial points for Korean Hip-Hop's success as a genre on its own:

1. Collaborations: Collaborations between Korean Hip-Hop artists and artists from other genres, such as Pop and R&B, have become increasingly common. These collaborations have helped to bridge the gap between different musical styles and give KHH a wider audience.
2. Lyrics: The lyrics in Korean Hip-Hop songs often address social and political issues, as well as personal experiences ([Um, 2013](#)). This has helped to give KHH a more distinctive and personal voice that sets it apart from other musical genres.
3. Social media: Social media has played a major role in the growth of the KHH industry ([J. Ahn et al., 2013](#)). Many KHH artists have large followings on platforms like Instagram and YouTube, such as Jessi and Jay Park, which have allowed them to connect with fans and promote their music.
4. Labels: Korean Hip-Hop labels have helped artists by providing them with a sense of identity in the music industry. Labels provide a platform for young KHH musicians,

which are considered to be the fourth-generation rappers since 2021; the label is meant to nurture and help them gain recognition, for example, Yumdda's and The Quiett's new label Daytona Entertainment, which after opening in 2020 almost immediately signed three up and coming artists (["H3heyon and Touch the Sky Join Daytona Entertainment," 2021](#)).

5. Festivals: South Korea is home to a great variety of Hip Hop festivals; amongst them, some of the most popular are the Incheon World Music Fiesta, RAPBEAT FESTIVAL, and HIPHOPPLAYA Festival. The HIPHOPPLAYA Festival is the largest outdoor weekend Hip Hop festival in South Korea and features some of the biggest names in Korean Hip-Hop, such as Jay Park, Lee Hi, ZICO, Epik High, and many more ([Angan, 2022](#)). The RAPBEAT FESTIVAL is an annual multi-genre music festival that started as the biggest Hip Hop festival in Korea; the multiple stages are aptly named to guide fans towards the sub-genre that they better enjoy and to display the different sides of K-Hip Hip ([Zuza, 2022](#)).
6. Survival Shows: There are a number of South Korean rap survival shows that have aired over the years; however, there one show stands above the others, *Show Me The Money*, going from Season 1 having an average viewership rating of 1.4% to Season 4 recording an average viewership rating of 3% ([Jeong, 2022](#)), it's success would lead to two spin-off's *Unpretty Rapstar* and *High School Rapper*. These shows offer viewers an insight into the Korean Hip-Hop scene and provide an opportunity for aspiring rappers to showcase their talents ([Ye-Eun, 2022](#)).

These are just a few of the ways in which South Korean rap is making its mark on the global music scene, developing itself as a genre that's not just connected to K-Pop. It is an exciting time for this industry, and it will be interesting to see how it continues to develop and grow in the years to come.

2.4 Women in Hip-Hop

Women have been a vital part of the Hip-Hop culture since its inception in the late 1970s; they have contributed to the genre as emcees, DJs, break-dancers, and graffiti artists, among other roles; nevertheless, despite their contributions, women have historically faced significant obstacles and challenges in terms of representation and recognition within the genre. Some of the women pioneers in the genre include MC Lyte, Queen Latifah, and Salt-N-Pepa, who broke new ground for female artists in the genre; later in the 1990s and 2000s, artists such as Missy Elliott

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and Lauryn Hill continued to push the boundaries for women in Hip-Hop, both in terms of their musical output and their impact on popular culture ([Hope, 2022](#)).

In recent years, the representation of women in Hip-Hop has increased, with a new generation of female artists such as Cardi B, Nicki Minaj, and Megan Thee Stallion making their mark on the genre, but the challenges in terms of gender inequality and representation in the industry are far from gone, women are underrepresented in Hip-Hop media and award shows, facing discrimination and sexism. This lack of representation is spread across all major roles in the music industry, especially songwriting and production, which gives even more imbalance to female rappers among the “elite” male rappers ([Wallace, 2017](#)).

Discrimination against women in Hip-Hop is a long-standing issue that has been perpetuated by the male-dominated industry. Misogynistic lyrics are common in rap songs; 37% depict women as objects, while 4% justify violence against them; these lyrics often describe women using derogatory terms such as "bitches", "hoes", or "chickenheads" ([Weitzer & Kubrin, 2009](#)). In recent years, female rappers have been pushing back against this discrimination, rejecting the suggestion that black women and their expression are only worthwhile when they're in pain and challenging regressive ideas about sexuality and gender presentation ([Younger, 2018](#)).

Overall, while there has been some progress toward greater representation for female rappers in Hip-Hop over recent years, there is still much work to be done to address discrimination; women continue to be trailblazers and play a critical role in shaping the genre and popular culture, as the genre evolves and grows, it is important that the contributions and perspectives of women are acknowledged and celebrated.

2.4.1 Women in South Korean Hip-Hop

Unfortunately, South Korean female rappers face similar challenges as other female artists in Hip Hop globally, such as sexism, gender bias, and lack of representation; this is due to the fact that the South Korean music industry is still very much male-dominated, with producers, label owners, and distributors being mostly men, the power is completely given to one side of the gender spectrum. Despite these challenges, many female artists in South Korean Hip-Hop are breaking down barriers and paving the way for future generations ([Choi, 2021](#)).

Marketing campaigns to assist women in the South Korean music industry have been made in K-Pop ([Chow, 2015](#)), and mostly due to the indirect connection of the genres, they have also assisted Korean Hip-Hop rappers. K-Pop's broader audience has also helped to create

opportunities for female raps to perform and collaborate with one another and has helped to increase visibility for women in the industry.

So while there is still much work to be done to ensure that female artists in South Korean Hip-Hop receive the recognition and support they deserve, the presence of talented female rappers, producers, and events that promote women in the industry are promising signs for the future of the genre ([Gogler, 2023](#)).

2.5 Conclusion

It can be concluded that Hip-Hop, in general, is male-orientated, and while there are very talented women trying to open the door for others, there is still a steep road ahead. The influence of American Hip-Hop in Korean Hip-Hop is also not a majorly positive one, and though the culture that surrounds them is also to blame for the shape in which their music is molded, misogyny and sexism are very prevalent in both.

The fame of shows like *Show Me the Money* has been somewhat positive in sharing about female rappers; however, it is also a place that doesn't always share the most positive views on women that serves mostly its male contestants, women are like objects in these shows, or like in *Unpretty Rapstar* they serve as drama for the shows to gain views. Unfortunately, there are very few studies that focus specifically on South Korean female rappers, and none that I've found truly mention their importance in these survival competitions.

With a better understanding of how rap culture has influenced the misogyny towards women and how women are viewed, there is still a need to understand how they have been represented in these important rap survival shows throughout the years so that we can provide a better way of understanding and improve on their mistakes.

3. Content Analysis: Three South Korean rap competitions

3.1 Show Me the Money

Show Me the Money, most commonly written as SMTM, is a South Korean rap competition TV show that airs a new season every year on MNET, the South Korean equivalent of MTV, a paid television channel dedicated to music owned by one of South Korea's most prominent companies, CJ E&M.

Due to *Show Me the Money*'s male-oriented format, which barely presents women, the following research of the seasons is a fully detailed description of every moment female contestants have had on *Show Me the Money*. The story of friendships and enemies only gets more significant as the series continues; by detailing how women have acted and been perceived in this series, hopefully there will be a better understanding of its merits and shortcomings.

In SMTM there are ten episodes in each season and about 9 to 10 rounds, with some rounds being divided between two episodes; for example, a round might start in the middle of episode 6 and end in the first quarter of episode 7; the first round is always an "open audition" in front of the producers, although there is probably a pre-screening process before the show even starts; if the contestant passes this round, they are given a golden necklace with the show's name; from there, at the end of each round, there are usually contestant eliminations like any other show. The rounds are different in most seasons; for example, when a team is made, they can have a diss round against another team or a team song round using famous beats from songs outside the show.

SMTM typically has four "producer" teams, usually referred to as judges in other shows, but in SMTM they are called producers due to their role in creating music for the contestants on their

team. In order for the contestants to choose their team in round four, the producer teams perform; typically, the songs performed have already been released by the producers; however, if the songs were specifically written for SMTM, they do count in the show's discography, such as Zion. T's "*Knock*" for SMTM5.

3.1.1 The First Two Seasons

Although a few years ago, the first two seasons of *Show Me the Money* could be watched online, they can no longer be accessed outside of South Korea; no re-uploads of them have appeared online for some time now; and no news articles have covered them in depth. Fortunately, they are usually seen more as the pilot seasons, since the budget would rise exponentially in *Show Me the Money 3*, and the format for the rest of the show, apart from SMTM777 and SMTM8, would follow that season; nevertheless, the first two seasons will be mentioned together.

Show Me the Money's first season, released in 2012, had a female producer, Miryo, making it the only season up to the time of writing this thesis to have a woman in that position; Miryo is the rapper of *Brown Eyed Girls*, a K-Pop group, who were extremely popular in 2012. Cheetah, an underground female rapper, was the first female contestant; when she participated on the show, she was unknown; however, after she made her solo debut in 2014 with *Cheetah Itself*, this short EP would aid her in joining the female spin-off of *Show Me the Money*, *Unpretty Rapstar*.

Show Me the Money 2 was released in 2013, this time there was only one woman present in the series, a female contestant named Lexy. She was seen as Lee Hyori's rival after her first album, *Luxury*, was released in 2003; however, her fame would fade with time. After her fourth album, *The Lexy*, in 2008, Lexy would take a break and only return to the scene in SMTM2. This would, unfortunately, mark the end of her career. After performing poorly in the first round, Lexy would take off backstage and complain to her producer, Lee Hyun Do, the scene was short, but left an impact. Lexy would take to social media, in now-deleted posts, to claim the show had done "*evil editing*" but nonetheless, the damage had been done, and after a few hours, she'd apologize and drop out of the show.

3.1.2 Show Me the Money 3

Producer Teams :

- **Team Brand New Music:** Swings & San E
- **Team Illionaire:** Dok2 & The Quiett
- **Team YDG:** Yang Dong-geun (also known as YDG)
- **Team YG:** Tablo & Masta Wu

Show Me the Money 3 aired in 2014; the first episode of this season started with auditions in front of the producers; there seemed to be a lot more participants this time around; however, most were male, with barely any women in sight until halfway into the episode, where they spent five minutes quickly going through the auditions of 8 female contestants that passed to the next round.

The first woman shown is Kisum, who was given some backstory before rapping; she was somewhat popular in her province but still a rookie in the rap industry. The four contestants after her were not named, and only one of them was shown rapping. Then came the drama; the following rapper was Tymee; as she rapped, the camera kept cutting to another woman who seemed to be smiling smugly and, in the end, commented, "She is *nothing special*", referring to Tymee's rap; then they showed that woman's rap followed by Tymee's reaction, "She *wasn't that good*". The show hinted at a connection between the two but did not disclose it. The last woman to appear was a high school student; the producer judging her, Swings, disclosed in a confessional scene that he usually does not expect much from girls that age; however, this contestant surprised him, and he gave her the necklace, telling her that she was the best rapper so far; the episode then moved on to the next audition without having shown her name.

The episode then ended with the beginning of round two. The first person to be called was Tymee. In this round, the contestant had to rap for one minute in front of the judges; if all four teams failed the rapper before the sixty seconds were up, the contestant was eliminated. Tymee entered the stage, and the judges took almost no time to mention the drama that had previously been set up in the first round. Tymee had made some diss tracks against two other female rappers, KittiB, and Jolly V, the latter of whom commented on Tymee's rap; SMTM3 then showed some confessionals where the two ridiculed each other and a quick look at their previous disses; it then showed the stage again, where this time Jolly V entered and explained she dissed Tymee first because she did not like her attitude, calling her "*just a girl*". The episode ended with both starting their rap.

The second episode opened with a male rapper named New Champ losing the round. It then quickly shifted back to the drama involving Tymee and Jolly V, recapping the first episode and

adding more disses before showcasing their rap. Jolly V took to the stage first; her rap reflected her determination to win, and although she used several English catchphrases, the producers seemed to enjoy her performance, granting her an *All Pass*. Producer San E said, "Tymee said you'd fail", to which Jolly V responded, "In your face, yo!" in English. Finally, it was time for Tymee's performance; right after the second line, she appeared to make a mistake and blank out, being unable to perform the song properly after that; the producer teams started to fail her, and by the time the sixty seconds were up, none had given her a pass; the show cut to the reactions of other female contestants, and finally to Jolly V, who commented that this is what she expected from Tymee; back on stage, the producers explained that they could not give her a second chance and that she must return the necklace. Tymee is then shown placing the necklace in a metal grid, and her final scene on the show is a confessional of her crying and wishing she could have shown them how much she had improved.

Skipping some more contestants, we are then introduced to three high school contestants, one of them being the previously shown girl who had been judged by Swings, Yuk Ji-dam, who has finally given a proper introduction. Yuk Ji-dam, 18 years old at the time, was a student of Heo In-chang, a first-generation Hip Hop rapper who had participated in *Show Me the Money 2*; after seeing this, she decided to join the show herself. Yuk Ji-dam gets to the stage, and it is disclosed that her first-round rap had been a "copy rap" from producer Dok2, meaning the lyrics were not hers; producer Swings says he feels betrayed by this and would not have let her pass if he had known. Yuk Ji-dam's powerful rap convinces the judges, even Swings; she gets an *All Pass* and happily celebrates; the producers comment positively on her, and the scene ends.

After Yuk Ji-dam, two other female rappers appear: Nada from the K-Pop girl group Wa\$\$up and Kisum. They are both grouped due to their beauty. Although they don't make any mistakes, they are both only passed by Team Brand New Music; this made the other producers question Swings if he had passed them because they were pretty women.

Halfway through the episode, a group of contestants is shown being passed by the only producer "team" consisting of one person, YDG; in that group, there were two women, one of whom he commented, "Don't *give up here*.", meanwhile, the other producers seemed pretty annoyed at his choice of rappers, with YDG even saying he was the "*Hip Hop rescue team*". The rest of the episode showed male contestants and ended with some quick shots of rappers who were not shown in round two but passed, ending it with the reveal that there were only 46 contestants left and a quick explanation of round three.

The beginning of episode three was simultaneously the start of round three, the 1v1 round, where a contestant's name was picked at random from a box and they could choose their opponent. The show quickly cut through shots of the remaining contestants, some of whom were women

who had yet to be shown so far; an excellent example of this was Kim Lin-na, who was called to a 1v1 against a man; Kim remarked that she could beat anyone who thought she was an easy target. No other female was seen selecting or being selected; they were only shown in a few frames after the duos were made; it was difficult to see how many were still in the competition, but it was at least eight.

Fifteen minutes into the episode, fan favorite rappers CJamm and Giriboy are put together; they had no choice as the last person to pick was Jung Min-jae, a female rapper, who picked Jolly V, leaving the other two male contestants to battle each other.

Thirty-six minutes in Yuk Ji-dam and her opponent walked in, both made a lot of mistakes, which upset the producers; they granted Yuk Ji-dam the pass. Another woman was shown after, much like Yuk Ji-dam this match was full of mistakes, however, she it was not shown whether she passed or failed. The third match was Kisum's, her opponent was another woman, the producers called the two "*SMTM3 top visuals*", once again this match had a lot of mistakes; the producers picked Kisum, who left the stage in tears and said that she rather have lost.

Episode four gave a short revival round for four of the survivors who lost their 1v1s; none of the chosen were females; after this, there seemed to be 25 contestants, but they did not reveal who they were. The fourth round was the producer performances, in which they tried to persuade the contestants to join their teams by using their songs and stage presence; after the performances, the contestants were called one by one to a room with four doors, one for each team; none of the women were shown deliberating. The teams were limited to four members, so if there were more than four people inside the rooms, the producers would choose whom they wanted, and the others would be eliminated right away.

After everyone had chosen their team, they were then called onto a stage where the producers would pick the four members they wanted; the first room to be called out were the ones that had picked team YG; eight people had picked the team, three of them were women; Jolly V was among them, but only one woman actually made it onto the team: Yuk Ji-dam, the producer's third pick. Team Brand New Music had six people in their room; one was a woman whom they did not pick. Team Illionaire had the same numbers as Team Brand New Music; however, they did pick Toy, the woman who had joined their room. The last team, Team YDG, had six people in their room; however, none were women. Hence, out of the 16 contestants who made it onto the teams, only two were women.

Episode five was the beginning of the fifth round; in this round, the producers would eliminate one of the members of their team using their own methods. Since, at this point, there were only two women, the focus was on their team; Team YG called in four artists from their

company to assist in deciding which member to eliminate after the contestants performed; DJ Tukutz, one of the guests, commented about how amazed he was at Yuk Ji-dam's vocalization; after the guests left, the team producers made some comments about each of the four contestants before elimination; Tablo commented on Yuk Ji-dam, saying her gestures were distracting and her rap was too old-fashioned; every other member of the team thought she would be eliminated; however, Snacky Chan (male) would be the one eliminated, although the producers did not seem to have anything wrong to say about his performance. Team Illionaire's approach was different; they had their rappers perform individually over a beat, with only the two producers judging; after the performance, two of the contestants, Chamane and Bobby, were picked without comments, leaving only Toy and Pyungan; The Quiett, one of the team's producers, would comment that Toy needed to learn how to project her voice, nonetheless, they would keep her on the team, which meant both women had made it to the Top 12.

The fifth round's second part was individual performances in front of an audience; Yuk Ji-dam was the second person chosen to go on stage; she would awkwardly state that she was new to rap, with less than a year of experience, so people would usually ignore her; this seemed to make producer Tablo cringe; she did, however, go on to appeal to the public for their support before starting her rap. Yuk Ji-dam's performance would be a disaster; soon after it started, she forgot her lyrics, and as the music faded, Yuk stated she continued without it, only to freeze again before exiting the stage with a "*Thank you.*". Toy was shown soon after, with producers from other teams chiming in, saying she had not improved and was boring to hear. At the end of the performances, the teams were ranked based on the audience's votes for their artists; the top team was Team Brand New Music. Each team then went inside a room and discussed the contestants rankings; the contestant with the most points in each team got to have their own song right from the beginning; the other two, however, were given the same song to work with, and before the performance, the producer team would pick which one got to go on stage; neither of the women got first place in this round, meaning they had to prove their worth if they wanted to make it to the "*first round*".

Episode six kicked off the "*first round*", meaning the first round, with songs made by the producers and contestants specifically for SMTM. While doing the soundchecks, Yuk Ji-dam commented on Olltii, the contestant going against her, saying that his stage was less impressive than hers, a comment that was then echoed by Team YDG. Toy was against Chamane, and after his soundcheck, she was shown in a confessional saying that Chamane needed to prepare his motion better; on the other side, Chamane did not say anything negative or even constructive about Toy, simply stating that she was well prepared, but he will win.

The time came for the performances and for the producers to pick who went on stage, first with Team YG; contestant Olltii commented in a confessional that Yuk Ji-dam had already

shown what she could do, but he hadn't; therefore, he should be picked, no matter how Yuk hoped she could perform; the show quickly cut back to the producers deciding backstage as they seemed to notice many flaws in Olltii's soundcheck, all the while praising Yuk Ji-dam. Back to the moment of choosing, the producers pass Olltii, eliminating Yuk Ji-dam, who is shown crying in her last confessional, saying "*I did well to get this far.*"; Olltii went on to perform *OLL' Ready*, the song both contestants were training with.

Episode seven continued the performances. Starting with the elimination of Team Illionaire, both Toy and Chamane are shown talking in confessionals, with Chamane mainly saying he was younger than her and still had a chance to improve, while Toy considered she could do better than Chamane on stage; in the end, Chamane was picked, eliminating Toy, who is then shown walking out as Chamane was performing.

This marked the end of women as contestants in this season of SMTM. From this point on, there were only women as collaboration guests and audience members.

3.1.3 Show Me the Money 4

Producer Teams :

- **Team Brand New Music:** Verbal Jint & San E
- **Team AOMG:** Jay Park & Loco
- **Team Hi-Lite Records:** Zico & Paloalto
- **Team YG:** Tablo & Jinusean (Jinu ans Sean)

The first episode of Show Me the Money 4 aired in 2015 and had the same format as the previous season. However, just as the number of applicants increased from SMTM2 to SMTM3, so did the number of contestants this time around, going from 3,000 to 7,000.

The episode opened with a brief history of the producing teams, one of which was Team AOMG, consisting of Loco and Jay Park. The show explained that Loco, a former contestant and winner of SMTM1, paid attention when judging the contestants; they then showed a few clips of him listening to the participants, one of whom was a woman with a crutch under her arm. Loco listened to the end and then exclaimed, "Oh yeah!" but the scene ended before we could see whether he passed her or not.

Thirty-six minutes into the first episode, SMTM4 briefly brought up the women from the previous season before it focused on the current season. Then, while passing some text at the

bottom of the screen that read, "The path to acceptance is still far and rough," it skipped past the auditions of twelve female contestants who had been eliminated from this season.

The contest's attention was drawn to a lone female competitor, Jiyeon, the former leader of the controversial K-Pop group Glam, who explained that she was competing because she needed money to support her music career. It then cut to her audition, where she rapped about her former group's demise and how it affected her. Although producer San E thanked her for sharing her story, he did not pass her because he believed she was still missing one percent.

Another female contestant caught everyone's attention when she introduced herself as Kasper, a friend of Kisum, an SMTM3 contestant who rose to prominence in the previously released *Unpretty Rapstar*. Kasper was the first woman to be depicted passing the auditions for SMTM4. Kisum escorted Kasper to the audition, where female fans surrounded her. Kasper confessed that she had become envious of Kisum's fame and had decided to join the show. In her audition rap, Kasper mentioned her beauty as a side benefit to her rapping talent while demonstrating her knowledge of both English and Korean. Tablo, the producer judging her, gave her the necklace while saying "*You have a nice tone.*".

After Team Hi-Lite Records eliminated the majority of the contestants they judged, a select few participants were displayed; one of them appeared to be a girl who was sobbing while sitting on the floor and requested that no video be taken of her.

When the show switched back to San E judging, he seemed to be more upbeat as he appeared to enjoy dancing with the contestants. He then bowed "90 degrees" and asked the camera crew, "Has there ever been a grandmother on Show Me the Money?"; the woman was then shown, and the show cut to a pre-recorded interview; here, she introduced herself as Choi Byung-ju. Returning to the audition, she began it seriously before repeating "shake it" a few times, which caused San E and a few other contestants in the background to laugh. After that, her rap was no longer taken seriously, San E danced along with her and hugged Choi Byung-ju in the end before eliminating her.

Later on in the competition, a few contestants "stand out.". One of them was a girl who fake laughed halfway through her rap, making producer Loco smile. Following this grouping, the focus shifted to producer Verbal Jint's judging, which primarily focused on his reactions to contestants. One of the contestants he judged was a woman who used props during her rap, one of which was a banknote, which she threw on the ground. When Verbal Jint noticed this, he bent down to pick it up, gave it back to the woman, and thanked her for her performance before moving on to the next contestant.

Episode two ended the auditions with two famous male contestants and starts the second round of the show, which worked the same way as the previous season. A hundred and nine contestants remained for this round, and even though the first episode only showed one woman passing in the first round, there were at least four in different shots of the contestants' lobby for the second round. The first woman shown in the second round was grouped as a high school rapper "*hoping to be the next Yuk Ji-dam*", as written by the show; however, she was eliminated.

Kasper's turn to compete in the second round arrives 50 minutes into episode two. As she took to the stage, producer San E asked her if she was close with Kisum, to which Kasper responded that she was, producer Zico also asked which was better at rapping, to which she did not respond. Kasper initially looked nervous, and as Team YG pressed the fail button, she started to make mistakes that quickly resulted in her elimination.

The show quickly skipped through some of the performances that had already passed, giving about a second to each, during which it was possible to see two women who had not yet been shown. Another female contestant was quickly shown as a "*female version of Zico*", a producer on this season; she was eliminated while rapping.

The third round is initiated in episode three, and it proceeds similarly to SMTM3 in that two contestants choose a well-known beat and write their own lyrics before rapping in front of the producers. One contestant is chosen, while the other is eliminated.

Black Nut, a male rapper who was depicted in the first episode as an "adversary" to Song Mino, a well-known idol rapper who competed in this season, is one of the first contestants to choose their opponent. The show tried to fool the viewers into thinking Black Nut would pick Song Mino for the 1v1 match by showing clips of him saying he'd win if they faced each other, but Black Nut called out Ahn Soo-min, a female contestant who had not yet been shown on the show, leaving everyone surprised. When asked if he chose Ahn Soo-min because he liked her, Black Nut replied, "Yes, she is pretty," which made the other contestants laugh at the awkward situation.

Both were shown on stage for the third round, wearing similar clothes; producer San E commented that they looked like a couple going on a date. SMTM then showed the training for round three. Black Nut seemed to be eyeing Ahn Soo-min as she trained; he was then pulled aside by the camera crew, where he shared how happy he was in the moment. The scene cut to Ahn Soo-min reapplying her makeup and spending time with other male rappers. After seeing this Black Nut asked to be left alone, a text on screen implied he sat alone for the following half an hour before Ahn Soo-min returned; she sat next to him but he avoided her. The show then cut

back to the third-round stage, where the producers continued to joke about the two contestants, even asking Ahn Soo-min if she had a boyfriend.

Their performance began, and Ahn Soo-min's rap went by without any mistakes. Then Black Nut's rap started, but he seemed to forget his lyrics after the third sentence, starting to freestyle. The producers seemed to go cold after this. The song ended with Black Nut taking his phone out and repeating "*Your number.*" while getting closer to Ahn Soo-min, who stepped away from him laughing awkwardly.

The producers kicked off their evaluation of the performance by saying it was a disappointment and did not at all seem like either contestant trained or cared. The teams vote, and it ends in a draw, meaning the two contestants would have a rematch with a different beat; Black Nut and Ahn Soo-min seem to freestyle without any mistakes. At the end, when the producers asked Black Nut if he actually wanted to win Show Me the Money, he explained he did, but had stage fright. The producers voted again, and Black Nut won, getting a cap for passing the round. The show then filmed Ahn Soo-min and Black Nut outside of the filming studio, where Black Nut attempted to put his cap on her, she pulled away and said, "*I'm okay.*", Ahn Soo-min wished him good luck as he tried to hug her, but she once again pulled away, offering her hand for a fistbump instead.

Another woman briefly made an appearance as the show moved through the competitors who wanted to choose Vernon, an idol rapper, for the third round. Later, while showing unimpressive performances, two women were visible; but they were not shown rapping, conversing, or being declared the winner. Only one woman was visible leaving the stage with a cap at the conclusion of round three, and only one woman was visible at the beginning of round four.

Episode four introduced the "*Guerrilla Cypher*" round, with a special guest, Snoop Dog, a famous American rapper, called in to judge; the round consisted of a single beat played for ten minutes, and a single microphone for twenty-eight contestants; everyone must rap, and if they didn't they were immediately eliminated.

When the beat started, many of the competitors gathered around the microphone, following whoever held it. One of them was a woman who was first seen attempting to take the microphone from Taewoon, a competitor known for being Zico's brother, but failed. After Taewoon's rap, she was again shown attempting to take the microphone unsuccessfully, and that's when the program revealed via text that she was Choi Yuri, the only remaining female competitor. After one of the contestants finished his rap, he finally handed her the microphone, but Choi Yuri made an obvious

mistake right after the first verse. She continued for two more bars before identifying Song Mino, who was nodding to the beat to her left, and handing the microphone to him.

The producers and Snoop Dog decided which rappers they would eliminate after the round. Before making the first announcement, the contestants voiced over their predictions for the losers. Incredible said, "*The female rapper messed up, I thought she would definitely be eliminated.*". The camera then panned to Snoop Dog, who announced the first elimination was Choi Yuri. She walked away followed by a camera, the interview outside the room, still crying, said she expected that this round would be a team mission so that she could enjoy the performance and then go home.

Once again, this marked the end of females as contestants in Show Me the Money 4.

3.1.4 Show Me the Money 5

Producer Teams :

- **Team YG:** Zion.T & Kush
- **Team Illionaire:** Dok2 & The Quiett
- **Team:** Mad Clown & Gill (this team wasn't from label or given a name)
- **Team AOMG:** Simon Dominic & Gray

Show Me the Money 5 aired in 2016; the first episode followed the same format as the previous season; once again, the number of contestants applying had grown; they also grew this time, from 7,000 to 9,000 applicants.

The first episode started with the introduction of this season's producers, followed by the auditions. The first episode started with the introduction of this season's producers, followed by the auditions. While Dok2 was judging, two high school girls seemed to forget their lyrics; Dok2 encouraged them and told them to keep going, but he failed every young person he judged. About 35 minutes into the episode, producer Gray entered the pavilion to begin judging. Many of the female contestants were shown gasping at his sight. As he approached one of the female contestants to judge her audition, she started to rap but stopped when she looked at him and said, "You're handsome, man." He laughed, shook her hand while thanking her, and moved on to the next contestant. Two more girls were shown after her, looking rather nervous to perform in front of him.

The camera panned over to a woman looking at Gray. She introduced herself as Ha Joo-yeon from the K-Pop group Jewelry; the first song she had been in was successful, but the group went through many member changes and eventually disbanded. Ha Joo-yeon had not appeared on camera in almost two years, and since she had no source of income, she had to work part-time jobs.

While interviewing Ha Joo-yeon, her father, actor Ha Jae-young appeared; he talked about the long hiatus his daughter had after the group disbanded and how worried he was for her to start over again; nonetheless, he supported her decision.

Back at the audition, Gray and Ha Joo-yeon greet each other, in a voiceover, Gray, commented that as soon as he saw Ha Joo-yeon he knew who she was but had never actually heard her; Ha Joo-yeon began to rap but seemed to be out of breath at the end of every sentence, she repeated the same expression three times but couldn't seem to be able to remember the rest of the lyrics, Gray thanked her and moved on to the next contestant.

The show cut back to the pre-recorded interview, where Ha Joo-yeon talked about how she wanted to show how much she loved to rap through her participation in SMTM5. Back after the audition, Ha Joo-yeon was crying on the ground, regretful that she had gotten nervous and could not perform the rest of the audition, and so she was eliminated.

Producer Mad Clown was known for forgetting his lyrics, so they showed him giving second chances to rappers who had forgotten theirs. The first contestant to appear in this group was a woman who attempted to do two raps but forgot the lyrics both times. The second was also a woman who stopped rapping when she realized she had not been looking at him, and Mad Clown stated there was no problem with not looking at him while rapping. The third contestant shown was also a woman, but this time we got an introduction as this female rapper was a contestant in *Unpretty Rapstar 2*, Ash B; who was judged by Mad Clown during that series. Ash B seemed nervous to start rapping, but as she began her confidence seemed to rise; at the end Mad Clown gave her the necklace. In a confessional he shared she'd gotten better since the last time they met, and he wanted to see her perform in the second round.

Fifty-seven minutes into the first episode, the series showed the crowd of contestants outside and the "*beautiful female contestants*" in it. They then showed five female contestants rapping, for about two to five seconds each, before being eliminated; the show did not share their names; a few more women were shown after failing, but we do not get to see them rap. The camera cut to a woman who seemed relaxed; she introduced herself as Giant Pink. Three years prior, she had asked current producer Simon Dominic to give her feedback on her rap, to which he had responded that it was bad. Simon Dominic greeted Giant Pink with a handshake; she cleared her

throat before confidently rapping; the producer nodded his head along, and as she finished, he handed her the necklace, saying "*You're good.*".

Episode two kicked off round two at about eight minutes in, which worked the same as the previous seasons. It was announced that eighty-one contestants had made it through the auditions, and looking at a few camera angles, there were at least five female contestants still in the competition.

After the second contestant's performance, producer Dok2 commented about the sofas they were sitting on, mentioning they were also used in *Unpretty Rapstar 2*, thus Ash B enters; Mad Clown shared his previous opinion of her in *Unpretty Rapstar 2*, saying her concept felt excessive but her first round in SMTM5 was "refreshing". Producer Simon Dominic mentioned her negative opinion of male rapper G2's pass in the first round, to which she replied, "If you forget your lyrics, you get eliminated."; Simon Dominic then asked if she could win a 1v1 against him, and Ash B answered, "*I don't care who my opponent is.*".

Ash B's rap seemed confident even after the producers started pressing their fail buttons; eventually, all the producers failed her, and she walked out disappointed. The producers discussed the elimination after Ash B was no longer on stage, saying her "*pacing was a little weak*" or that she changed tone halfway through and it didn't fit as well. Mad Clown then remarked about how hard she had worked in *Unpretty Rapstar 2*, and how he wanted to see her succeed this time.

The majority of episode three was filmed in Los Angeles, where there was a special first and second round with guest judge Timbaland, an American rapper and producer. The episode primarily focused on the second round, the 60-second rap round, with flashbacks to the first round used to introduce the contestants.

Twenty-one minutes into the episode, SMTM5 introduced us to four non-Koreans of African descent; the first two to perform were men, and both failed to impress the producers. They then introduced Miss LA, and as she rapped, the producers nodded their heads. Timbaland said that she is good; producer Kush failed her, but by the end of her performance, he was the only one to do so. After her performance, Timbaland and Dok2 were the first to speak, claiming they could immediately sense her confidence. However, Dok2 questioned whether she was capable of writing and learning her lyrics in Korean, to which she replied, "It's possible when you know what the stakes are.". Throughout the conversation, the camera occasionally cut to Kush, who appeared unhappy but remained silent. He was then shown in a confessional sharing that there was nothing special about her.

A few contestants later, the fourth person of color was called on stage: Legendary Temo, a female rapper. The show cut to a pre-recorded interview with her, in which she introduced her girlfriend and their kid. Legendary Temo shared that she was homeless and did not have money, but tried to "hustle" by giving out flyers and selling her CDs. She did not want to rap about the life she had, but the life she wanted to have. Back on the stage, producer Kush seemed captivated by her and said he couldn't wait to see how her rap sounded over a track; her rapping began without any problems, but somewhere in the middle, producer Gill failed her, but much like Kush for Miss LA, he was the only one to do so. The producers discussed her performance; all but Gill said they loved her energy, and Dok2 went as far as saying he would like to feature her in one of his songs; meanwhile, in a confessional, Gill asks if there is anything new about the rap presented by Legendary Temo.

At the end of the second round in Los Angeles, the producers picked four people to immediately pass to the third round, offering flights to South Korea; none of the women were picked; however, they had one more ticket to give out, which was decided through a cypher; both women did well in the cypher; in fact, they were the two contestants up for the last spot; however, the producers couldn't pick which one to pass, so they were called out again, just the two of them, for a 1v1. The South Korean producers begged Timbaland to pick which one they should give the ticket to; Timbaland picked Legendary Teemo, as he felt like she wanted it more.

Fifty minutes into the episode, it returned to South Korea, announcing there were now only 37 contestants left. The third mission was the 1v1 mission; however, before that, the show would have a cypher. The cypher was to be divided by the number of passes the contestants got during the second round: *All Pass*, three passes, and so on; unlike the previous seasons, this special round does not have eliminations.

The first woman to be grouped was Shim Hyeji, who was in the "*at risk of elimination*" category, the lowest one, having only gotten one pass; the second woman was Giant Pink, who was not called for but could be seen standing in the same category; the third woman could also be seen in the lowest category, no name was called out, and she had not been shown in the competition before.

After announcing the groups, the show's presenter called out the rappers from LA, stating that there were only four since the fifth couldn't join due to personal reasons. Junoflo was the first to walk in, and as he did, the camera cut between different contestants, two of them being Shim Hyeji and Giant Pink, who shared a smile. In a confessional, Giant Pink shared that Junoflo looked cool. The other LA contestants walked in except for Legendary Temo.

Content Analysis: Three South Korean rap competitions

The cypher began with the lowest group, the unnamed female contestant was the first woman on the mic, on her shirt there was a now more visible sticker with Tilda written in Korean, she was only seen rapping one line, and right after her Giant Pink rapped two lines, which were a call out for contestant C-Jamm, who answered in a confessional "*The cypher amongst danger of elimination was just that, "danger of elimination".*". Following the lowest group's cypher, other rappers gave some comments about it, but none were towards Giant Pink or Shim Hyeji.

The fourth episode began by reminding the audience that there were forty-one contestants left for the 1v1 round; however, due to it being an odd number, a "lucky" contestant had been added. Before showing the contestant who had been added, they showed a phone call between a television producer and Legendary Teemo, where she explained she had no ID and no money for the passport, so she had not even applied to get it, which meant she could not make it to South Korea.

The new contestant was called out, this being none other than Miss LA, who presented herself to the contestants with a short rap; after she closed it out, the other contestants clapped, and the show cut to a confessional from Jung Sang-soo, a male contestant, who said "*She was very sexy, and charming too.*"; followed by Myundo with a similar statement; and then the three South Korean female rappers: Tilda, now with the name officially appearing in the subtitles, said she expected more from Miss LA; Giant Pink said she isn't much competition; lastly, Shim Hyeji said "*I think you're going to have to go back to America.*".

During the contestant callouts for the 1v1 round, the first woman to appear was Giant Pink who was called for a 1v1 by Dilla, a male rapper, who called her up as "auntie" hearing this, Giant Pink asked "*You want to die?*". It was then shown Shim Hyeji choosing Miss LA and Tilda choosing a male rapper, Lee Taek-min. Fifty-eight minutes into the episode, a short clip from Tilda's 1v1 battle with Lee Taek-min can be seen, grouped alongside other performances that fell short of the expectations of the producers; nonetheless, the result of this battle is not shared.

Episode five continued the third round, starting with the 1v1 between Shim Hyeji and Miss LA; the show does a flashback to Show Me the Money 2, in which Shim Hyeji first participated and became a hot topic due to her violent lyrics; it then showed her in this season of SMTM, on the second round, where producer Simon Dominic had shared he wanted to see her in the 1v1 round because he wanted to "*see something scary.*".

Producer Simon Dominic inquired about any issues backstage before the 1v1 match began. It soon became clear that this is exactly what had occurred because Miss LA did not speak Korean and Shim Hyeji did not speak English, so their performance consisted of them both rapping in their respective native tongues. Then the producers spoke in Korean, mostly praising Miss LA.

The camera appeared to show Shim Hyeji maintaining a serious expression while Miss LA grinned. Dok2 started to say in Korean which contestant had passed, but Miss LA interrupted him before he could finish. He then repeated in English that Miss LA was the contestant moving on to the next round.

Giant Pink's 1v1 was not shown, but later in the episode, when introducing round 4 and the team selection, she was shown, alongside Miss LA.

Twenty minutes into the fourth episode, the producer performances began, followed by the announcement that there were twenty-one contestants left. This time, the producers were ranked, and they received benefits based on their position. The rappers were called one by one to a room with four doors, but unlike in previous seasons, the contestant and producer had to pick each other. The contestant would stand in front of the door they wanted, while the producers sat at the end of a hall, unable to see which door had been chosen. If the door opened and the producer was standing on the other side, they had matched. This is where the producer performance ranks came into play; each producer had a limited number of chances to get up; if they got up and the contestant chose another producer, they wasted one of their chances. The only woman shown picking her team was Miss LA, who tried to go for Team Illionaire with Dok2, but unfortunately, they did not accept her.

Episode six continued the fourth round's team making, with the nine contestants who failed the team matching, among them Giant Pink and Miss LA. Giant Pink tried to join Team Mad Clown & Gill but was not picked by them, being eliminated. Miss LA tried to pick Team YG, unlike her first pick with Illionaire, but was not picked, also being eliminated.

This marked the end of women as contestants in SMTM5.

3.1.5 Show Me the Money 6

Producer Teams :

- **Team Dynamic Duo (4Duo)** : Choiza & Gaeko
- **Team AOMG&Illionaire (도박/Gamble Gang)**: Dok2 & Jay Park
- **Team FANXYCHILD (CoDean)**: Zico & Dean
- **Team Feel GHood (Suicide Squad)**: Tiger JK & Bizzy

Show Me the Money 6, released in 2017, the first round had the same format as the previous season; upping the numbers once again, from 9,000 to 12,000 applicants.

The first episode introduced the season's producer teams. Tiger JK was the first to judge the contestants, who appeared to be afraid of him; only one woman was visible during this segment, and she was only shown crying for a few moments. After him, Team Dynamic Duo, consisting of Choiza and Gaeko, stepped out to judge; Choiza encouraged the contestants with a smile; one of the people he judged was a girl who, even though she was not passed by him, said he "*looked like a father figure*".

During producer Dean's judging, there was a woman who did not pass; as Dean walked away, she cleared her bangs and crossed her arms; the camera then cut to two women laughing in amusement. No other women were shown in the South Korean auditions.

For the first time, the series had auditions in New York; during these auditions, there was one woman that stood out, HeeSun Lee, whose online audition for the show was a "hot" topic with her unique "*swag*". In a pre-recorded interview, HeeSun Lee shared a bit about her life, her two daughters, and the fact that she was adopted. HeeSun Lee talked about her adoption at birth into a Chinese American family and how she was never able to return to South Korea, so this would be an opportunity to share her message and reconnect with her roots.

HeeSun Lee's audition rap was entirely in English, but she was confident and made no mistakes; when she finished, producer Gaeko asked if she had any Korean rap, to which she replied that she would train her Korean for the show; Gaeko gave her the necklace, trusting her to do so. In a confessional, Gaeko confessed that she was very charismatic and rapped well. HeeSun Lee stated after the audition that she wanted to represent women in the show and go further to prove that they can do it as well.

In the second round, another woman would appear more than halfway through episode two. Producer Choiza mentioned that they had not yet judged any women in that round; producer Gaeko agreed and said that this season did not have many women; hearing this, producer Tiger JK said "*I hope that many female rappers will rise this season.*". The show cut between shots of different female contestants listening in on the producers' conversation.

On a screen, the name Ato appeared followed by the entrance of a woman onto the stage; Ato's first sentence on the show was "*I've come out with the goal of becoming the first female winner.*". Producer Zico asked if she had any opponents in mind, and she replied that no one could beat her. Ato's rap was confident and bold, and she received an *All Pass* from the producers, but no comments were shown.

Following that, Asol, another female rapper, entered; the producers also asked her if she thought there was any woman she would want to compete against; unlike Ato, Asol responded that she simply didn't want to compete against another woman. Asol's rap was motivational and powerful, and it earned her an *All Pass*.

Truedy, the winner of Unpretty Rapstar 2, was the third woman to appear in this segment. The show cut to a confessional of producer Zico, where he shared that he was curious to see Truedy's performance. Truedy spoke on stage about her regrets for not promoting herself better after Unpretty Rapstar 2, as well as her desire to make more songs for Show Me the Money 6. Truedy's performance felt rushed, but she made no mistakes.

Team CoDean was the only one that failed her, and in the end, producer Zico explained why: he expected her to have improved after seeing her two years prior in Unpretty Rapstar 2, but instead she got worse, disappointing him. Producer Jay Park also stated that he thought she was good but not good enough to be named Unpretty Rapstar 2's winner. Producer Gaeko stated in a confessional that Truedy had problems and that if she couldn't overcome them, she would remain "*just as a rapper who is similar to another person*"; he reiterated this concern to her on stage, adding that if there was no improvement in round three, she was in danger.

After leaving the stage in tears, Truedy shared that she wanted to show a new side of herself, but it wasn't working the way she wanted.

Episode three was the start of round three, this time the format for the round had some slight changes; similar to past seasons the contestants were called to pick their opponent at random; however, in the previous round the contestant wrote down whom they could beat, making it so in this round each contestant could only select from a list of people who thought could beat them. The seventy contestants picked their opponents, however, no woman was shown picking or being chosen.

Much later in the episode, it was revealed that rapper Penomeco chose Asol for the 1v1 round; he explained on stage that she was the only one left who seemed less well-known and easier to go up against; when the producers asked how Asol felt about him picking her, she revealed she shook her head in an attempt to tell him not to pick her.

Both performed flawlessly, surprising the judges, and even though Penomeco was expected to win, Asol won the producers' vote, advancing to the next round. Producer Zico said Asol's rap was more powerful and felt like it was meant to be on the final episode; producer Dok2 said a strong rap like that from a female contestant was something they had never seen before in confessionals.

Episode 4 showed that Nucksal, a possible season winner, chose Ato; producer Tiger JK was disappointed because he wanted to see both compete in the rest of the season. The show presented previously unseen footage of Nucksal's second round, during which he saw her perform while sitting in the waiting room and thought she was really good, ranking her in the top five of his favorite performances. After, a few clips of male contestants were shown, agreeing that Ato was an amazing performer.

The reason Nucksal chose Ato was revealed to be that he only had seven opponents to choose from. Female contestant Kasper, who'd not been shown so far, commented on this matchup by saying both rappers were the kind of people others would listen to and go "Wow".

The performance began with Nucksal's rap, which was flawless; however, before Ato began, a confessional of producer Zico praising Ato was shown; Ato's rap started well, but she went on to make two mistakes in the middle; although she never stopped rapping, her reaction made it very noticeable. Despite the producers' praise towards Ato's performance, it was clear that Nucksal was the winner.

Both walked off the stage, and Ato immediately began crying. Producers Tiger JK and Zico consoled her, saying she had "*hit the jackpot*" once the show aired. Outside the studio, Nucksal motioned for her to call him and encouraged her not to stop rapping, considering that the producers had complimented her rap.

At the end of the third round, the show quickly presented a few contestants being passed, one of them was Truedy. Kasper was shown with her 1v1 opponent putting the hat on her head, congratulating her on the win. Lastly a high school girl was shown telling Jo Woo-chan, a famous male kid rapper, to make it since the final, showing she had not passed.

In episode 5, it was revealed that only thirty-five contestants remained, as well as a different fourth round in the way teams were chosen. In this season's cypher, the contestants were randomly selected into groups of seven by the producing teams to rap in a spontaneous cypher, with the added factor that the beat changed randomly; the winning rapper in each team immediately got to choose whatever team they wanted, while the last would be eliminated.

The first group was picked by Team 4Duo; the third contestant to be called out was Kasper; the show commented on this with a text at the bottom which said "*The contestants are stirred after Kasper is picked.*"; followed by it showing that Kasper had the worst second round score of all seventy contestants and was only chosen in the third round because producers had to

pick "*who sucked less*". Some contestants were overheard saying that she had only passed the previous rounds through luck.

The rest of the group were popular and well-liked male rappers; contestants that had not been picked were glad, calling it "the group of death". In the first beat, Kasper commented she did not want to trap, so she had to wait; as the second beat came around, Kasper went up to the mic; the camera cut to male contestant Killagramz, who said "*She made it here a bit forcefully*". Kasper's rap was flawless, but it lacked inspiration; producer Gaeko stated that he felt she was "*psychologically affected*," making him pitiful of her.

The show's MC announced at the end of the group's performance that he would call out the rapper with the lowest score, but before he did, the camera cut between different contestants who said they expected Kasper to be eliminated. Ice, a male contestant who was shown making a mistake during his rap, was then announced as the loser; Kasper finished sixth.

The following two groups had no women, however, the fourth group had two female rappers. Asol, who was called in third; in a confessional producer Zico said she had to do her best after beating Penomeco, a good friend of his. The other woman was Truedy, who was the last one called to be in the group. Asol admitted she wanted to avoid going against Truedy because she considered her to be above other women, and she knew people would compare the two; meanwhile, Truedy thought Asol was very different from other female rappers, admitting she was jealous that "Asol has her own color".

As soon as the first beat began, Asol grabbed the microphone and began rapping confidently; the producers complimented Asol's rap, saying she was always a surprise. Truedy approached Asol after she finished rapping and asked for the mic, but only a line in, she fumbled her lyrics; recovering as quickly as she could, she continued to rap, but Team 4Duo was shown comparing the two female contestants, declaring Asol to be the most talented of the two.

The first eliminated rapper of this group would be Kim Sungpil, who had also made a noticeable mistake in his rap; however, another rapper had gotten the same score, Truedy, who was also eliminated, making this the only group with two contestants eliminated at once. Asol seemed truly shocked by the elimination covering her face as her eyes widened. Team 4Duo called the elimination a shame because, apart from her mistake at the start, Truedy's vocalization and lyrics were good, and she had improved from the previous round. Truedy got one final message through, before exiting, where she said that since she had not shown how much she improved in Show Me the Money, she would show it in her upcoming album; Truedy started to get emotional part way through her speech but managed to not break down. Producer Zico told her that although she was lacking in some aspects, he hoped this opportunity would help her grow. Asol finished

fourth place in the group; she wasn't shown saying anything but simply nodded her head when her placement was announced.

The rest of the contestants who did not get first or last place were called out by the producing teams, one by one, until each team had five members, a change from the previous seasons, which had four members on each team. The team's picking order was decided based on the placements they had for their performances at the start of round four. However, much like the previous season, but this time in reverse, the contestants that were called out could reject the team that called them in hopes of getting the team they wanted.

The show's MC announced there were only five spots on the team; the next team to pick was Team GHood, who chose Asol, who accepted, joining the team. As she sat down with the team, the other producers mentioned her win against Penomeco several times, as well as her strong rapping skills.

In the end, Kasper was not picked, making it so the only woman left was Asol.

The fifth round began twenty minutes into episode six; this time, the round was a team song. The team's producers would create a beat and help with the lyrics; the song would then be recorded and finally performed. Unfortunately, at the end of the performance, one person was eliminated by the producers of their team and removed from the officially released track.

During the individual members' introductions before the performance, Asol's introduction was the video of Penomeco saying she looked weak, so he could beat her. To prepare for the performance, Team GHood went to a boxing academy, where producer Tiger JK hoped they could learn that "*once you beat your fear, everything becomes fun.*"; male contestant, P-Type, had difficulties doing the exercises due to his heavier stature, which caused Asol to laugh, as she said, "*he looked like a hamster.*". The team's four male rappers fought each other in a boxing match as Asol watched.

Following the physical training, the team reconvened at the Feel Ghood Music office. P-Type asked Maniac who he thought would be eliminated in round five, to which Maniac replied, "*You.*". This comment seemed to irritate P-Type, who asked the other members for their thoughts. Asol pretended she could not hear him questioning her and awkwardly laughed when he continued to press for an answer. Finally giving up, P-Type expressed regret that he would not be able to see Asol again, and she agreed, advising him to leave with caution.

The team was shown recording the song; Asol was the second person on the microphone. As she got up, producer Tiger JK commented that she should change her name to Ace because

she was the team's ace. The assistant tried to lower the microphone for her to record, but Asol was still too short for the lowest height, which made them have to place a case on the floor for her to stand on. After her recording, the other contestants on her team commented on how cute she looked, but in contrast, her rap was so powerful. Asol, on the other hand, also commented on Black Nine and P-Type's performances, saying of Black Nine that his rap was lacking, feeling sort of one-note, and of P-Type that he had really "*sharpened his knives*".

When it came time for the performance, Asol's rap started strong, but she seemed to forget her lyrics as it neared the end; nonetheless, Asol continued rapping.

The team producers had a hard time picking whom to eliminate because, much like Asol, P-Type had also made a mistake. Some of the contestants were shown commenting in confessionals about which one should lose: Woo Wonjae and Hash Swan thought P-Type should be eliminated, while Killagramz and Nucksal thought it would be over for Asol. After everyone's comments, producers Tiger JK and Bizzy announced that P-Type was eliminated, reasoning that they preferred to assist a newer rapper in the industry.

Episode seven was the start of round six, the diss battle; the show's MC took out of a box the name of Team CoDean, giving them the advantage of picking whichever team they wanted to go up against; Team CoDean picked Team Gamble Gang, which automatically made it so that Team 4Duo and Team Suicide Squad would be up against each other.

The Team 4Duo members picked their opponents, with Nucksal and Jo Woochan picking Asol and Woo Wonjae; while choosing, Jo Woochan joked that the four had two things in common: Woo Wonjae and he were wearing beanies, and both Nucksal and Asol were women; this joke stemmed from Nucksal's long hair.

Moving forward, on stage for the diss battle, the show's MC mentioned how hard it must have been to prepare a diss against Jo Woochan since he was still a kid, to which Asol answered that out of everyone she was the only one who could scold him; Jo Woochan, after hearing this, joked that he felt sorry for them because they would lose to a kid.

The show featured a few confessionals from contestants on other teams who were terrified of competing against Jo Woochan. When Team Suicide Squad was preparing their disses, producer Bizzy explained that they couldn't go too hard on him because he was a child. In a confessional, Asol said that it shouldn't be hard because his age is enough of a weapon. However, Jo Woochan's involvement meant that the team couldn't curse or make rude gestures on their stage, which made the battle difficult.

During the performance, Asol and Woo Wonjae made no mistakes, and even with the lyrics being rather tame and witty, they got the audience to cheer along with them. Despite this, the crowd quickly gravitated to the side of Nucksal and Jo Woochan as they rapped.

After the performance was over, the MC announced the results: out of two hundred points, one team got one hundred and fourteen votes, while the other got only seventy four. The losing team was Team Suicide Squad, and the first member to be shown reacting in a confessional was Asol, who shared that she felt a little upset that they had to eliminate a teammate after this round.

The episode continued to show the other rappers' performances, only revealing the eliminated rappers at the end of the round. As Team Suicide Squad was called to eliminate their contestant, producer Bizzy shared that no one deserved to be out in his heart. Some contestants from other teams pointed out that Maniac was in jeopardy on Team Suicide Squad because he struggled with his Korean lyrics, but Asol was also in danger for playing it too safely.

Asol was announced as the eliminated rapper by producer Bizzy. Both producers admitted in a confessional that Asol was very unique, which is important as a rapper, but that the others performed better than her

Asol thanked her team for the opportunity to collaborate on music and said that even being in the top 16 felt like a dream. In a post-elimination confessional, Asol stated that all she wanted was to make it past the second round, so she was more than satisfied with her performance. As she walked out of the studio, Asol smiled and joked, "*Show Me the Money is so cruel.*" She then explained that it was a tough competition, that she was proud of making it that far, and that she would audition again the following year.

This marks the end of women as competitors in SMTM6.

3.1.6 Show Me the Money 777

Producer Teams :

- **Team Just Music:** Swings & Giriboy
- **Team VMC (119):** Deepflow & Nucksal
- **Team Hi-Lite & AOMG (CodePalo):** Paloalto & Code Kunst
- **Team Illionaire Ambition:** The Quiett & Changmo

Specially named Show Me the Money 777, also read as Triple 7, which started airing in 2018, the show's format was different from the previous seasons. With the name dedicated to "jackpot", everything revolved around "*money*". The first round was not shown; instead, it started immediately with 140 contestants in the second round.

In the first episode, round two would set off the season majorly, introducing a new concept, "*money*". The contestants would perform for sixty seconds, and if they passed, the producer who gave the pass would set an amount they thought the contestant "was worth". Women were shown sitting among the contestants, but none performed in this round.

In episode two, round three, one woman was confirmed to have passed the second round, Swervy, who had the lowest amount of "*money*" possible. Unlike previous seasons, this round was a three-way battle. The three contestants performed without any mistakes, no matter how Swervy was eliminated in favor of male rapper Lee Dongmin.

This marked the end of women as contestants in SMTM777.

3.1.7 Show Me the Money 8

Producer Teams :

- **40 Crew:** Swings, Mad Clown, Kid Milli & BOYCOLD
- **BGM-v Crew:** Verbal Jint, Giriboy, BewhY & millic

Show Me the Money 8, which was released in 2019, also changed the format, going from four teams to two, and instead of calling them teams, they were referred to as crews; otherwise, not much changed from the usual show setup.

The first producer to judge contestants was BeWhy, who was a well known and respected rapper, also, he had won season five of Show Me the Money. However, his accomplishments and posture seemed to strike fear in contestants who would freeze after looking in his eyes; in the group shown to demonstrate this there are two women. Later, as producer Verbal Jint was shown politely eliminating contestants one woman was shown.

One hour and nine minutes into the episode, the show presented a segment dedicated to the female contestants applying. The first woman to be shown was Swervy, who'd been shown in the second round of SMTM777; after the previous season, she'd been signed to Hi-Lite

Records, gaining her a lot of popularity. The show questioned a few female contestants about whom they considered to be strong opponents, to which they answered, Swervy; even the rapper herself bragged about her potential. Meanwhile, closely behind her stood another female rapper, a new trendy rookie called Yunhway.

Giriboy was the producer judging Swervy; as she prepared herself, a confessional of hers could be heard, in which she stated that as long as no mistakes were made, she would pass. Swervy started rapping, but after the fourth line, Giriboy thanked her and moved on to the next contestant, eliminating her. Swervy was heard saying in a voice-over, while standing in disappointment, that she did not understand the elimination.

The producer judging Yunhway was millic; Yunhway's audition started straight off with her rap; as she was finishing her first verse, Yunhway made a lyrical mistake and asked Producer millic to start over again; he agreed, and she rapped one more time; the second time she made no mistakes, and Producer millic handed her the necklace. Swervy had been looking at Yunhway's performance, and as she got her necklace, she looked shocked, followed by a bittersweet smile. Producer millic explained that the reason he passed her was due to her unique charm.

For the first time, at the end of round one, there were re-evaluations in which a different producer than the one who judged the contestant heard their rap again. These re-evaluations were not limited to rappers who had failed the first round; rappers who had passed the first round could also choose to be re-evaluated. In the first episode, no woman was seen being re-evaluated.

In episode two, they introduced changes to round two's format, since there were only two crews and the passes were individual, meaning that each one of the eight producers had to fail the person for them to be eliminated.

While the show featured some of the contestants' "*special talents*," one of them was a woman who chose to demonstrate her recorder skills; however, no name or rap was shown during this segment.

At forty-seven minutes into episode two, Swervy walked on stage, greeting the judges. Confused, Giriboy asked if he had eliminated her; she confirmed he had; however, she was re-evaluated by producer Mad Clown. Swervy's rap was stable and seemingly flawless, but soon the producers started failing her one by one; there were around ten seconds left when producer BOYCOLD pressed the fail button, and as he was the last of the eight to do so, she was eliminated. After she left, BOYCOLD explained that it seemed like the song never went anywhere as it was just one-note throughout; the other producers agreed.

Yunhway was called on stage after Swervy. When producer Kid Milli asked Yunhway why she joined the show, she replied, "*I think there's nothing I can't do.*". After producer BeWhy asked if all of the raps she had prepared were for Show Me the Money, she confirmed this and stated that she did so to match the competition's style.

Yunhway began rapping but almost immediately tripped over her lyrics and stopped, before requesting to restart. The producers were disappointed, but the outcome of this request was not shown immediately.

One hour into the episode, a female rapper called Yuja entered the stage. Producer BOYCOLD shared with the other producers that in the first round, Yuja had rapped about eggplants. The show cut to that scene, where she had asked BOYCOLD if he liked eggplants, and when he said no, Yuja performed a rap dedicated to those who disliked the vegetable. Back in the second round, producer BOYCOLD explained that he passed her because her rap compelled him to listen until the end.

Yuja's rap was very cute, which surprised the producers, who actually started to smile. The waiting room contestants also smiled and laughed at the performance. Yuja received an *All Pass*; producer Swings praised the performance as refreshing; the fact that the song was about mosquitoes did not detract from the performance; it was a song that anyone could enjoy. All of the producers agreed that Yuja's voice and the melody she chose were unique. After Yuja had left, producer Swings turned to BOYCOLD and thanked him for passing Yuja, because if it had been any other producer, she would have been eliminated in the first round due to her style being far from what people call Hip Hop.

It returned to Yunhway's performance one hour and twenty-six minutes into the second episode; once again, she was shown stopping her rap and requesting a restart, but this time the producers were shown signaling for her to continue rapping. Yunhway was visibly shaken, but she attempted to recompose herself as the producers began to press their fail buttons. Yunhway managed to resume rapping with twenty seconds left in the performance and seven producers having failed her.

The result of her performance was not shared immediately; instead, she was shown off stage after the performance, where she shared how much she thought about what she'd done and how disappointed she was in herself. At the end of the clip, Yunhway revealed that she had passed, which was an even bigger burden for her.

The show returned to the stage, where Yunhway saw that producer Mad Clown was the only one who had passed her. As the Pass sign lit up behind her, the other producers looked

perplexed, wondering if someone had forgotten to press the button; producer Mad Clown confidently confirmed that he had not forgotten to press the button and that he had intended to pass her. Yunhway herself was stunned, claiming that she did not deserve to be passed. As she exited the stage, Yunhway expressed her disappointment at having been passed.

Producer BeWhy mentioned that she was probably nervous; nevertheless, producer Mad Clown assured them that she would do better in the next round. The contestants, on the other hand, were vehemently opposed to this decision. Yunhway admitted that she knew she would be heavily criticized by the other contestants and that she lacked the confidence to face them, but even so, she was forced to return to the waiting room.

In confessionals, two of the producers chimed in with their opinions on this decision, intertwined with Producer Mad Clown's. Producer Verbal Jint considered it controversial, comparing it to a horrible decision he had made in SMTM4. As if answering that, producer Mad Clown said he could very well deal with the criticism; because he believed it would pay off and Yunhway would be able to show why she passed. In the end, producer BeWhy understood both the side of the contestants who thought of it as unfair and Mad Clown's, who saw potential in Yunhway.

In episode three, around nine minutes in, another female rapper, Bryn, entered the stage. Producer Swings shared that Bryn was already well known in the Hip Hop scene as a member of the Dickids crew, the only woman in the crew. Producer millic, pointed out in the paper she had filled out for the show, that Bryn said her charming point was being cute, and he jokingly confirmed he found that to be true.

Bryn's song and rap were groovy, and the producers appeared to be having a good time. Bryn received an *All Pass*, and producer BeWhy expressed excitement to see her in the third round. Meanwhile, her crew celebrated her *All Pass* in the waiting room. Producer Swings said it was very charming; Producer Kid Milli called her a "*very multifaceted artist*."

When asked which crew she wanted to join, Bryn answered millic's crew, because he was sincere and gave her the necklace. Producer Swings repeated BeWhy's sentiment by saying he too looked forward to seeing her in the third round. Bryn left the stage excited by her *All Pass*, celebrating with a big smile.

The third round of the season started half an hour into the third episode. This round was completely different from the previous seasons. The eighty-eight contestants had twelve songs to pick from, teams were made for each song. This required the contestants to perform as a group; however, half of them were eliminated in the end.

On the second performance of the third round, Yuja was shown to have picked Cardi B's "Bodak Yellow" beat. The show commented on top of Yuja's footage that she looked quite uncomfortable while listening to the beats. In the end, as everyone began to pick their song, Yuja admitted, in a voiceover, that she did not have a favorite song, so she picked "Bodak Yellow" to avoid the worst ones. Yuja thought she was in trouble because she did not expect this type of round. As she trained, Yuja shared with her teammates that she could not memorize her lyrics, and they tried to comfort her by saying that they, too, had not memorized theirs.

The performance started with Yuja in the front, rapping the hook; a male contestant did the first verse; and then it returned to her, but after the first bar, Yuja forgot her lyrics. The waiting room collectively exhaled in disappointment, while the judges shook their heads. Yuja only picked back up on the last bar, finishing her rap, before walking to the side of the stage with her head low.

As the song ended, producer Kid Milli said, "*She looks like she's about to cry. I don't want to say anything.*". Producer Swings picked up the board in his hand and started to read out comments for Yuja; the first was that his expectations were too high, and the second was that the beat was the wrong choice for her. Producer BOYCOLD agreed that the beat was unfortunately not right for her. Lastly, producer BeWhy shared that he did not find the general performance entertaining.

Yuja expressed her feelings as she heard the producers in a confessional; she didn't want to cry, but she was upset and angry at herself. 40 Crew admitted in their confessional that they did not feel her joy through the song and that she had been praised too highly in the previous round and had become too relaxed. The show cut to another performance before revealing who had been eliminated.

Later in the episode, Yunhway was revealed to be one of three contestants who chose SG Lewis' "Hurt" beat. As she walked in, the producers mentioned the previous round once more, with the show repeating footage.

Yunhway spoke in a voice-over as her third-round training was shown, saying that even if she had passed controversially, there was nothing she could do but show a better side of herself.

As the song started, Yunhway took the lead, rapping the first verse. Two contestants in the waiting room were shown commenting about how good she sounded. The performance went by with no mistakes from Yunhway; in fact, near the end, producer Mad Clown turned to Swings and said both she and another contestant were really good. No other comments directed towards

Yunhway were shown after. At the elimination, one of the male contestants on her team was eliminated; producer Swings announced that would be the only elimination, meaning Yunhway passed to the next round.

Yunhway commented in a confessional that she was relieved but also sorry. For her, the performance was better, and she had worked hard for it, but it didn't take away what happened in the previous round.

Near the end of the episode, it finally showed the eliminations for Yuja's group, with Yuja herself being the first to be called out. Producer Swings shared in a confessional that seeing Yuja standing timidly on a big stage made him realize how hard it was for her to show her talent. Producer BOYCOLD added that Yuja and SMTM were not compatible. BGM-v Crew all thought what had happened was unfortunate, but she'd been under too much pressure.

As the eliminated contestants were walking out, 40 Crew called in the Crew Pass, which could only be given by a crew once, to save whichever rapper they wanted to see pass to the next round. Producer Swings announced they had picked to save someone who had seen a lot of potential, someone who was unique, and that person was Yuja. After hearing this, Yuja was in tears, and in a confessional, she shared how thankful she was for the opportunity. Producer Swings commented that even if she couldn't believe it, he wanted the world to know her because people needed the kind of emotions she spread through her music. Producer millic also agreed with the pass; he shared that it was the right choice because she "*had something*", a sort of "*sweetness*".

At the end of the episode, graphics depicted the remaining performance teams with their respective eliminations marked; Bryn was the only other woman who appeared but was not shown performing; she advanced to the fourth round.

The fourth round of crew picking was once again different from the previous seasons. This time, part of the rappers got full control over which crew they wanted to choose; to have the ability to choose, they had to be picked as "*Tier 1*" rappers, those that were most wanted; the remaining rappers were then picked one by one by the crews. For the "*Tier 1*" rappers, a producer from each crew would be placed on a stage, and the contestant would listen to their appeal. Then, much like the second round of the show, in terms of what happened to the eliminated contestants, the crew that was not picked had the surroundings of the producer's stage lit on fire as their platform descended.

The fourth contestant announced to pick their crew was Yunhway, as the production crew called her on stage; two contestants could be heard calling her "*the controversial one*". 40 Crew

seemed sure she'd pick their crew; after all, producer Mad Clown was the one who gave her a pass.

40 Crew complemented her looks as she got on stage, and producer Swings said she looked like a model or an actress. Meanwhile, Producer Mad Clown was the one standing on stage. He said he did not have to appeal because she already knew how he felt. Producer Giriboy commented "*Woah, she's pretty.*" before pretending to realize the microphone was on, making everyone laugh. Yunhway lit BGM-v Crew's stage on fire, picking a very happy 40 Crew. Afterwards, Yunhway admitted that she went with the crew that saved her so that she could pay them back.

A bit later, Yuja was called to choose her crew. Under his breath producer, Giriboy can be heard saying "*We don't need Yuja.*". Yuja tapped on her microphone, signaling it wasn't working, picking up on this producer BOYCOLD, turned to the production crew and warned them of it; a love song played for a few moments before all the producers rushed to Yuja so they could offer their microphones. Yuja picked 40 Crew as expected.

Bryn was not shown picking or being picked, but once again in a graphic, we can see she joined 40 Crew, meaning all three women left in the competition were in the same crew.

Round five was announced as the 1v1 round, and the format changed as the contestants were divided into crews. The MC of the show flipped a coin to determine which crew would choose their first opponent, and then he chose a random name from that crew; that contestant could choose anyone from the opposing crew. The MC would then choose a name from a contestant in the rival crew to the first contestant, switching between the two crews until everyone had an opponent. Whoever won the round not only eliminated their opponent but also scored a victory for their team.

The first contestant picked was Seo Donghyun, also known as BIG Naughty, a high school student who chose Yuja as his opponent. Seo Donghyun explained he wanted to face Yuja in order to see whose Crew Pass was more valuable. Yuja threw some banter, by saying she could win either way to which Seo Donghyun hit back with "*Even if I only try half as hard, I will still win.*", riling up the other contestants.

The producers took the stage first, followed by a panel of special guest judges composed of producers and contestants from previous SMTM seasons. Because it would be unfair for the producers to vote on or against their own crew members, these special judges would be the ones voting in this round.

Halfway through the fourth episode, both crews had tied with three points each; the following duo was Lo Volf, a male contestant, and Yunhway. Producer Crush questioned which one had picked the other; Lo Volf answered that he was the one who picked Yunhway. The show presented some footage of Lo Volf picking Yunhway, where he explained that he picked her because he thought it would be easier to pick a beat that matched both of them. Yunhway nodded in agreement.

Back on stage, producer BeWhy asked if it had been hard to pick the beat, prompting another scene of the two contestants, this time as they were about to start picking a beat. Lo Volf turned to Yunhway and said he would be back soon, but in the meantime, she could listen to the beats. Yunhway finished listening to all the beats, but Lo Volf had not returned. Seemingly upset, Yunhway crossed her arms. In a confessional, Yunhway shared that Lo Volf had wasted a lot of their training time; she had already heard the beats several times and picked which one she wanted, but he had not returned. Lo Volf returned, blaming his absence on enteritis, an inflammation of the small intestine; he listened to all the beats while Yunhway waited.

The two contestants disagreed on which beat to pick; Lo Wolf thought that the beat Yunhway picked was too hard; however, Yunhway explained that it did not matter which one they picked at that point; they just had to choose one and make it work. Lo Volf left again to take his medicine, leaving Yunhway alone. Yunhway appeared to be looking at the other duos, who were shown to be training.

The camera stopped on Bryn and her male duo eating; she greeted someone approaching, which was then shown to be Yunhway. Yunhway complained, "*We're screwed.*"; to which Bryn asked frantically why; Yunhway explained they could not agree on the beat, and surprised Bryn repeated what Yunhway had said in the form of a question. Yunhway then explained she had picked a beat that wasn't perfect even for herself, but Lo Volf wouldn't budge from wanting his beat; in spite of that, the beat he wanted was impossible for Yunhway to rap on. Bryn's adversary, HunnyHanna, shocked by this, asked if they could even come up with a hook since the beat had not been chosen yet; Yunhway agreed they wouldn't be able to make a hook if they didn't decide soon.

Lo Volf joined the group, saying they had to do rock paper scissors to choose the song since he did not have lyrics for any song other than "Ben Baller". Yunhway gave up and agreed to listen to the song once again, moving back to their table. Lo Volf explained he had two verses, but they didn't fit any other song, and even "Ben Baller" was too fast. Yunhway accepted his beat, wanting to move on, she asked for his input on a hook for the song.

The show cut back to BeWhy's question on whether picking the beat was hard; this time it showed Yunhway's answer of "*It was extremely hard.*". The performance began with the hook; Lo Volf had the first verse; then the hook was repeated; and finally, it was Yunhway's verse. The show did not disclose this, but the verse she did was from a song called "junky" by Young B, which she featured earlier in 2019, months before the show. The verse fit perfectly with the new beat, and she made no mistakes.

The special guests began their comments, first with R&B singer Crush, who said that even though Yunhway thought she was at a disadvantage with the beat, it was nice to see that she kept faith during the performance. SMTM1 contestant Take One commented that although at first she seemed insecure, during her verse she showed more power. Finally, SMTM777 contestant Ph1 commented that there was one problem during Yunhway's part: Lo Volf's gestures, which were probably disturbing her and not part of stage etiquette. In the end, Yunhway won.

The special guests' thoughts were shared in separate confessionals, but they were all very similar, relatively close to Yunhway being a rapper with a lot of talent who could make a fun stage.

One hour and twenty-seven minutes into the episode, Yuja and Seo Donghyun walked on stage. Producer Kid Milli explained to the special judges that this was the "*Big Big match*", since both of the contestants were specially picked to pass the previous stage. The two producer crews stepped on stage to give support to each contestant, and seeing this Take One joked that it looked more like a children's competition.

The show cut to the two contestants choosing the song; Seo Donghyun explained he wanted to do a normal rap, but Yuja countered that by saying they only got this far because of their singing rap. The two listened to the beats, and Yuja quickly came to the conclusion she could only work with one song; however, Seo Donghyun could not do it, instead offering one song that they could perhaps meet in the middle.

The performance began, and the song playing was the one Seo Donghyun had shown. Seo Donghyun started the song, and everyone was surprised by his voice. The chorus kicked in, and then it was Yuja's turn; this time she made no mistakes. The song ended with the chorus, and both contestants ended it with an elaborate handshake.

Everyone, from the contestants in the waiting rooms to the special guest judges and the producers, commented positively on the performance, calling it "*truly legendary*". R&B singer Crush called Yuja "*very refreshing*" with a "*strong style*". SMTM777 winner Nafla shared that he loved her tone. The special judges voted, and shortly after they announced Seo Donghyun as the

winner, eliminating Yuja. In their respective confessionals, the special judges commented on Yuja's performance: SMTM4 winner Basick said she was very refreshing and unique; SMTM777 winner Nafla thought it was unfortunate that she was up against Seo Donghyun; previous SMTM3 producer, YDG, said he wished she had passed so more people could have seen her perform.

In episode five, as the fifth round was ending, they did not show Bryn's performance, but they showed HunnyHunna's elimination, confirming that Bryn passed to the next round.

At the end of round five, the show had a special revival round for four eliminated rappers in each crew, out of which two would move on to the next round while the other two were eliminated from the show. Yuja was one of the contestants picked by 40 Crew, since they could pick whatever beat they wanted, Yuja picked the beat she initially chose for the fifth round against Seo Dongyun. Yuja's rap was stable, but unfortunately, she was not one of the two contestants chosen to move on to the next round.

Round six started with the producers' Crew performance, and after that came the actual round, this time called Crew Battle. This season, the producers' performance did not have any effect on the round. 40 Crew won, with a difference of one hundred and seventy-one points. Before the contestants' part of the round started, the show's MC announced that the crews could only have eleven members for the next performance; BGM-v Crew had seventeen and 40 Crew had fourteen, meaning they would have to eliminate six and three members, respectively. This elimination did not have any performances; it was simply based on the crew producers' preferences. Neither of the two remaining women were eliminated.

Once again, for this round, there was a different group of special guest judges, which consisted of producers and contestants from previous SMTM seasons, who were called to decide which team won.

The sixth round followed the format of the previous season, which was not explained in this paper since there was no female contestant. This round was divided in two, the crew contestants would go one by one against members of the opposite crew using the same beat, which was also similar to the previous round; however, the crew could join in and dance or do background vocals. Although the crews knew the songs, they had no idea which contestant they would face. At the end of both rounds, the special guests would vote, and one crew would win, while the other had to eliminate one member from their crew; if there was a tie, the crews had to prepare for another round.

At the start of the round, Olltii, from 40 Crew, and Young B, from BGM-v Crew, were announced as representatives, and they played rock paper scissors to decide which crew had to

go first. Oltii won, and after discussing with his team, he decided BMG-v Crew would start, as that would mean they could always see their performances before doing their own.

Woodie Gochild, a male contestant from BGM-v Crew performed to Billie Eilish's "Bad Guy". After he finished, Woodie Gochild placed the microphone on the stand, and a male rapper from 40 Crew picked up the microphone as the crew made a corridor. In the middle was Yunhway, and as her rap started, the producers from BGM-v Crew commented amongst each other that it sounded good. Two special guests commented amongst themselves about how the ending of Yunhway's rap was missing an "*oomph factor*".

At the end of both performances, in different confessionals, the special guests gave their opinions. Both Take One and SMTM5/6 contestant Junoflo preferred Yunhway's rap. In spite of that, not everyone was positive about the performance. SMTM5 and SMTM777 producer Paloalto compared the rap to "Game of Thrones" saying it started great but ended with disappointment. At the end of the first part, the special guests voted, and BGM-v Crew won.

During the second part, the second rapper from 40 Crew was Bryn; she rapped while holding onto the microphone stand, and her crew members crouched behind her. After Bryn's second verse kicked in, her crew members got up and started jumping around. Bryn's opponent was Punchnello, a male contestant who was already popular prior to this season.

When commenting about both performances, the special guests praised Punchnello; SMTM3/5/777 producer The Quiett shared that he found Bryn's performance too low energy and that, after Punchnello, it was quite forgettable. Much like the first part, at the end of the second part, the special guests voted, and BGM-v Crew won again. Owen Ovadoz, from 40 Crew was the only contestant eliminated, meaning both women continued in the competition.

Episode six announced that twenty-one people had made it to the seventh round; this round was the crew song mission, usually known as the team song mission. The crew would split its members into two groups and have special guests judge their performances. The first group to perform was from 40 Crew, which had Yunhway in it.

The show cut back to the crew picking between two beats; right from the start, Yunhway wanted the beat "*Scoop*", and luckily was one of the contestants the producers had thought of for the song; initially, Bryn was also meant to be in this song, but she preferred the other beat, as it sounded cuter.

During the training for "*Scoop*", Yunhway was not shown; instead, it focused on a male contestant, Oltii.

In the performance, Yunhway entered halfway through the song, on the chorus; her rap followed right after it, and the producers were smiling and nodding throughout; the video cut to BGM-v Crew's waiting room, where contestant Jjangyou commented about how good she was, and Young B, another male contestant, said "*It must be awesome listening to her live.*".

After the performance, producer Giriboy commented on Yunhway's voice, saying that he thought he'd gone crazy from how cool it was; Yunhway bowed down and thanked him. The eliminated contestant from this performance was Olltii.

BGM-v Crew performed, followed by the second team from 40 Crew with Bryn in it. The MC shared that it had not been easy to make a hook for their song; producer Mad Clown affirmed that they actually had over ten different hooks. It then showed their process from footage to messages; Bryn was the first one to message a hook; however, producer Mad Clown answered that it was still lacking, so Bryn questioned about the deadline, which was the day before the performance. Bryn and fellow contestant EK did another hook each, but once again, producer Mad Clown asked for more; Bryn answered she would, and so did EK. The next morning, both delivered a different hook.

During the training session, the crew listened to both hooks; unfortunately for Bryn, the producers picked EK's hook. In a confessional, Bryn admitted that after hearing this, she felt like she was still lacking a lot.

Back on stage, the performance began. Bryn was the second to rap in the song; the contestants from team BGM-v Crew commented on her incredible tone control.

After the performance, she was not mentioned aside from a comment from producer Kid Milli, who called her a "*gem*". The producers eliminated a male contestant named Bully Da Bastard, meaning both women passed the round.

Round eight was explained near the end of episode six, as was the announcement that there were only seventeen contestants left. Different crew producers played rock paper scissors for the ability to choose their opponents. This round had three different stages, and the crews had to separate their teams into three groups of three members each; however, 40 Crew only had eight members, so one of their groups only had two contestants. BGM-v Crew won all the rock paper scissors, meaning they had all the power to pick their opponents.

The third contestant in BGM-v Crew to pick their opponent for the first round was Mckdaddy, who said he would pick someone that looked like a younger cousin; he then smiled

and called out Bryn, who was side-hugging Yunhway. Bryn seemed to bite her tongue at the remark, making producer BeWhy comment, "*She's upset*". The show's MC asked her how she planned to fight back, and Bryn answered she had to fight back in a petty way, which caused producer Swings to scream "*Pinch him!*".

Yunhway wasn't picked until the end, meaning she was in a group of two and up against two opponents, both well-known rappers, Jjangyou and Punchnello.

Episode seven began in a park outdoors, where the crews fought against each other in physical challenges in order to decide the performance order for the diss battle. The first battle to be disputed was the one with Yunhway; she participated in the first event but unfortunately lost, much like her team would continue to do, meaning the BGM-v Crew could decide the performance order for the 2v3 group; they picked to go first. Bryn also participated in the round for her group, but they also lost; BGM-v Crew also took first place in that battle.

In the training session for the diss battle, Yunhway shared with the producers that she had nothing to show for that day; she had written lines about her opponents but she didn't feel comfortable saying them. Neither the producers nor Yunhway knew what to do; after all, she had the biggest problem of the team by having two opponents.

On the side of BGM-v Crew's training, Jjangyou said he wanted to destroy Yunhway's "*spirit through the performance*". The show then cut to unseen footage of Jjangyou during the diss battle team selection, where he shared that he did not want to be against Yunhway or Bryn, and Punchnello agreed with him. In spite of that, when his team mentioned that it had to be someone seductive, he immediately agreed to do it. Back at the training, Jjangyou's diss was shown to be singing rap, while Punchnello copied Yunhway's rap style and used a beat she had collaborated on.

Three days before the performance, producer Swings was shown giving advice to Yunhway on the perceptibility of her lyrics.

The two groups entered the stage; the show's MC asked Yunhway how it felt to be in a 2v1, and she answered, "*The two of them combined isn't even one of me*"; Jjangyou hit back by saying she couldn't achieve the next stage with such low energy.

Jjangyou started the diss, in which he mostly mentioned how Yunhway forgot her lyrics during the second round. Punchnello put on a wig and mimicked Yunhway's initial pose during the sixth round; Yunhway laughed as she saw this. Punchnello's rap was mostly a play on Yunhway's rap lyrics from the previous song; halfway through, he stopped rapping and then asked

for another chance, once again a reference to her second round. At the end of the performance, Yunhway repeated "*cute*" a few times before approaching Punchnello and asking if the blue wig was supposed to be her; he confirmed, and she touched her white hair while saying "*It's not me though.*", Punchnello answered that originally it was blue.

In a confessional, Yunhway shared her thoughts on the performance, saying that it was well-received by the audience but "*it sucked.*".

It was then time for Yunhway's rap, which mostly focused on the not-so-great careers of her opponents; her rap was also well-received by the public and judges. Yunhway walked back to her side on the stage, and as she did so, she turned her head back to curse at them; whatever she said was bleeped out of the show.

At the end of all rappers performing, the crowd voted, and both groups walked off stage; the results were not immediately shared.

Skipping to the last group on 40 Crew, where Bryn was. As the MC called out which members would be up against each other, Bryn said she had the advantage, as her naive look would make people side more with her.

The training for this group mainly focused on two of the male contestants, not showing Bryn at all.

During the performance, Mckdaddy's rap came before Bryn's; he walked to the side of the stage and picked up a teddy bear, bringing it on stage to give it to Bryn, who happily grabbed hold of it and jumped around in joy, perhaps catching Mckdaddy off guard as he smiled widely before starting his rap. Mckdaddy's rap compared her to Young B, a member of Dickids, by saying Bryn is the oldest and most unknown of them; unfortunately, after that, Mckdaddy tripped on his lyrics but managed to compose himself and continue his rap.

After Mckdaddy's rap ended, Bryn pretended to be hurt by his lyrics, but soon she dropped the act and threw the teddy bear he had handed her. Bryn dissed Mckdaddy for debuting in Hip Hop at an older age and continued with the theme of old age throughout most of her diss. Bryn finished her rap with no mistakes, and the crowd seemed to have enjoyed it.

At the end of all performances, the two crews were called onto a stage, the public was no longer there, and the results were announced. In both Yunhway's and Bryn's rounds, their crew had won. This meant team BGM-v Crew had to eliminate one contestant, making both teams equal with eight members each.

Episode eight was the start of round nine; this round used the already set matchups from the previous round and made them collaborate on a song with each other; the public voted for their favorite, and whichever contestant lost was eliminated. Since Yunhway had two people, she kept Jjangyou, and due to his opponent's elimination, Donutman got Punchnello.

One hour and eleven minutes into the eighth episode, Bryn and Mckdaddy were shown discussing the diss battle. Mckdaddy commented that while the diss hurt, Bryn did a great job; Bryn explained that his problem was thinking she had no fighting spirit, so he let his guard down.

During the soundcheck, the 40 Crew producers commented that Bryn's stage presence was great; on the other side, BMG-v Crew producer BeWhy approached the stage to warn Mckdaddy not to avoid Bryn during their performance, as it looked awkward. 40 Crew producer Swings compared Bryn to Mckdaddy, saying that while Bryn was learning and her abilities continued to increase, Mckdaddy's skills were surely declining.

Their song was named "*Bonnie and Clyde*". The performance had a rising energy level, starting slowly with Mckdaddy's rap and speeding up during Bryn's rap, ending with a high-energy chorus that had both rappers run and jump on stage.

In the end, 40 Crew producer Kid Milli and contestant Yunhway both commented on how well Bryn did. During a confessional, BGM-v Crew producer Verbal Jint said he thought Mckdaddy was better than her, and in spite of that, Giriboy commented that Bryn was no easy opponent.

The voting was announced following the performance. Bryn won with one hundred and forty-six votes out of two hundred, eliminating Mckdaddy. As she heard this, Bryn turned to hug Mckdaddy and thanked him for his hard work.

The next performance was announced by the show's MC, who said "*The following rapper has managed to make their way through the many dramas they had to face, rapper Yunhway.*", and as for her opponent, Jjangyou, was announced as a "*rapper who overwhelms the stage with energy.*".

The two contestants were shown discussing the beat they were given, saying it had a summer vibe. Jjangyou said he'd rap about a beach in a Korean province, while Yunhway chose to make a rap about Highway 101, which connects Washington to California, making it a cross between east and west rap.

During the decision-making for the hook, Yunhway presented hers and Jjangyou immediately said they could just go with what she made, but since that would be considered backing down, Jjangyou showed what he had made; BGM-v Crew producer Verbal Jint, who was on Jjangyou's team, apologized but picked Yunhway's hook above his own crew member. Verbal Jint explained that Yunhway's hook was catchier, and even though Jjangyou's hook wasn't bad, it was still too "rough".

The song was named "*Gwangalli 101*". The performance had a relaxed atmosphere, really connecting itself with the feeling of summer. Both rappers made no mistakes, and the crowd seemed to have enjoyed the stage.

After, producer Verbal Jint was glad that Jjangyou wasn't forgettable even during Yunhway's part, as he played a supportive role in it. Meanwhile, 40 Crew producer Swings thought Yunhway did way better than Jjangyou, due to the way she had mastered her vocals. Both Yunhway and Jjangyou thought that they performed well as a group, and the other contestants agreed.

The voting results were shown, and Yunhway lost, having only gotten forty-four points out of two hundred. In a confessional, producer Swings shared that he was surprised by the point difference because, to him, that made no sense.

The show MC announced Yunhway's elimination, saying her way up to this point had been paved with drama and sadly this was her last performance, Yunhway nodded with a straight face. Yunhway thanked the team and producers for staying by her side until the end and hoped the crew would do well after she left; she then shook hands with Jjangyou, Verbal Jint, and her own producer Swings before walking towards Bryn and giving her a goodbye hug; Bryn told Yunhway she had done well.

In a confessional, Yunhway shared that Jjangyou had a lot of energy, and the crowd fed off of it; in spite of losing, she was glad to have stayed this long so she could learn and improve her skills. She then ended with a "*Thank you.*", leaving only one woman left in the competition.

At the end of all performances, the tenth round was announced as the quarterfinals, and the remaining eight contestants would once again go head-to-head against members from the opposite team; however, 40 Crew only had three contestants while BGM-v Crew had five, which meant two members from the same team had to face each other. In this round, the voting was divided into two parts: the first was right after each performance, and the second was after the show. Bryn wasn't picked as a matchup; instead, as all the spots filled in, she was automatically up against

Seo Donghyun. Bryn shared that she was content with her opponent since it was who she wanted; Seo Donghyun agreed, saying he also wanted to go against her.

The first match featured in episode nine was Bryn's. 40 Crew was shown hanging out in a restaurant, where they showcased Bryn's beat. The other contestants and producers loved the beat, but in spite of that, producer Kid Milli shared in a confessional that he had to send about fifty variations of the beat to Bryn, as she wasn't liking what he'd made. Bryn explained that she did not want to do the same thing again; instead, she wanted to show a new image of herself.

During the soundcheck, after seeing Seo Donghyun's performance, Bryn commented that it was cute, as expected. Bryn then stepped on stage to do her own soundcheck, and Seo Donghyun was shown happily moving along to the beat; beside him, with a serious face, sat producer Giriboy, who said that Bryn's performance looked more like she misunderstood the beat.

Producer Kid Milli explained that for this stage they wanted something more experimental, never seen before on the show. Bryn herself summarized the song as "*There is no cupid in this world*". To her, the world was colorless, so she wanted the performance to have as many visuals and sounds as possible.

Bryn's song was called "*Cupid*". The performance was extremely colorful; Bryn both rapped and sang, and after the first chorus, famous female R&B singer Park Jimin entered the stage to feature in the performance.

At the end, the 40 Crew producers were shown in a confessional, giving praise to Bryn; producer Kid Milli shared "*If the performance happened exactly as she wanted it to, then I am satisfied with it*". Contrary to them, BGM-v Crew's producer Giriboy thought the visuals were too overpowering, as was Bryn's voice.

Leaving the stage, Bryn commented that she regretted it a little, as she felt like she could have done better.

Seo Donghyun's performance came after Bryn's, and its theme was indeed cute. After both performances ended, the crowd voted; the results of the first round of voting were shown only to the two contestants, who then walked backstage to announce the outcome to their teams. Bryn walked in the dressing room and almost immediately announced she'd lost the first round.

The episode did not delay the second vote for the battle, showing it right after; both contestants stood on stage awaiting the results of the second round. As the numbers appeared on screen for the contestants, Seo Donghyun and producer Giriboy both gasped; producer Kid Milli

had his mouth open in shock while Bryn kept a straight face. The results were then shown; Bryn had lost, having less than half the points of Seo Donghyun. Bryn thanked everyone for the time she had on the show, saying she had learned a lot. Bryn promised she would continue to make music and show everyone the best sides of herself. Before leaving the stage, Bryn hugged Seo Donghyun and shook Kid Milli's hand, hugging the rest of her crew's producers and team members as she exited.

Outside the studio, Bryn exclaimed "*Wow, I'm so relieved.*". In the post-elimination interview, Bryn shared that she had learned a lot through this experience and was able to grow from it; Bryn was happy to have participated, and even though it was extremely tough, she would keep this moment as a nice memory.

This marked the end of women in SMTM8, the first woman to reach the quarterfinals, in the top 8.

3.1.8 Show Me the Money 9

Producer Teams :

- **Team Guljeot:** GroovyRoom (Park Gyu-jeong and Lee Hwi-min) & Justhis
- **Team CoPal:** Paloalto & Code Kunst
- **Team DyWhy:** Dynamic Duo (Gaeko and Choiza) & BewhY
- **Team Jagi:** Zion.T & Giriboy

Show Me the Money 9, released in 2020, was the first season post-COVID-19 pandemic. This season returned to four teams using the same format as SMTM3. It had 23,000 applicants; however, due to the pandemic, only a few contestants passed to the second round.

Due to the pandemic, the first round of auditions had to be slightly altered; the contestants were divided into groups of thirty and would each perform a short acapella rap in front of a producer team and other contestants.

During team Guljeot's auditions, the first woman appeared grouped with the returning contestant, Yuja, who was the last of the returnees to be shown. In her presentation, the show played a few clips of new contestants giving their opinion on Yuja; most of them did not like her and thought what she did was not Hip Hop, therefore she should not be on the show. However, previous contestants did not think the fact she got a Crew Pass and continued in the competition was her fault and understood it must have been hard for her to receive such negative comments.

Yuja herself admitted that she didn't want to apply to SMTM again and only did so to show she was capable of performing.

Yuja's rap this time around was more Hip Hop based, surprising the other contestants; however, even without mistakes, she was eliminated by producer Lee Hwi-min.

At the start of episode two, two female contestants were shown to have passed the first round. One of them lifted her necklace and said "All Pass"; her name could be seen in the subtitles as Since.

The show's MC then announced that only 122 people had made it to the second round and only 40 of them would move on to the third round, meaning 82 people would be eliminated. The contestants were shown quite shocked by the news, and amongst them were a couple of women not previously presented. Unlike the previous seasons, this one immediately kicked off the second round of the producer stages, because this time around the contestants would pick their teams right after their sixty-second performance.

Forty-six minutes into episode three, Since was called on stage for the second round. As soon as she appeared on stage, producer Paloalto explained he had been the one to pass her in the first round. Producer Gaeko from Dynamic Duo also shared that she had been the winner of the *Open Mic SWG*. Unfortunately, during her rap, the producers were "not feeling it", and the four teams chose to eliminate her, despite no flaws in her rap.

After Since, another female contestant was introduced, Yoo Dayeon, who surprised everyone with her looks. Unfortunately for her, the producers failed her; back in the waiting room, the other contestants chanted, "*It's okay!*".

The camera focused on another woman in the waiting room, who said that seeing so many women being eliminated was frustrating since they didn't even do that badly; in the subtitles, her name can be seen as *Kerrigan May*. The show then highlighted another female contestant, Mirani, who simply breathed out "*Female rappers...*".

Mirani was then shown entering the main stage; producer Gaeko asked her if there was any crew she was associated with, and Mirani shared that she used the same recording studio as Munchman. This caused the other contestants in the waiting room to comment that she had the same look as Munchman and her energy was overflowing.

Before Mirani's performance was shown, the show switched over to Kerrigan May. As she walked onto the stage, one of the producers commented that she had a beach vibe, and in the

waiting room, another contestant noted that "*she must work out a look; she has abs.*". Kerrigan May's audition was shown to have been judged by producer Justhis. The performance started, and although she made no mistakes, the producer teams started to fail her, except for Team Guljeot, as Justhis commented that she was better than even he expected, and they gave her a pass; but sadly, during Team Guljeot's discussion, producer Park Gyu-jeong shared that in his opinion she was just average, and Team Guljeot decided they did not want her to join them, therefore eliminating her.

Mirani's performance was then shown; her voice seemed really shaky to the point where it became extremely noticeable once she tried to rap a longer note; three teams eliminated her in that moment, but Team Jagi's producer Giriboy checked with his partner whether he liked Mirani's rap, Zion.T said he did, and both gave her a pass. The contestants in the waiting room were sure team Jagi would pick Mirani since her rap was a style that producer Giriboy usually liked. The other teams chimed in on how interesting Mirani's ad-libs were; producer Giriboy agreed and added that the performance was very engaging. Team Jagi discussed amongst the two, and producer Giriboy finally shared on the microphone that although they would like to hear her again, she had fallen short of their criteria so far and therefore they could not pick her. In a confessional, producer Giriboy shared that she was too off-key, and in the end, that was the reason they could not pick her.

Outside the studio, Mirani shared that she was saddened by the fact that she was so off-key, especially after hearing that the performance was engaging.

At the end of the second round, the producer teams realized there were still spots on each team and decided to call out some of the eliminated rappers for a special revival round. Mirani was the first person to be called, much to her surprise. She showcased a "unique groove" in acapella. Team Guljeot was the first team to announce the rapper they had picked to join them, Mirani, who happily joined them.

This meant that after the second round, there was only one female rapper on the show.

Round three was announced as a group cypher, where each team went on stage and the rappers had to perform to random beats. Unlike the previous seasons, where there was a single microphone, this time the contestants had to run and step into a circle in the center of the stage to rap to the beat playing.

The first team to perform was Team Guljeot. As the second beat, "Rockstar" by DaBaby, came up, a lot of the team surrounded the circle, including Mirani; however, another contestant, Mushvenom, had been the one to enter first. After Mushvenom finished his rap, Mirani tried to

enter but was cut off by a contestant named Yenjamin. In a voice-over, Mirani shared that having her spot taken like that could mean she was in trouble.

The fourth beat was "Freak" by Tyga and Megan Thee Stallion. Mirani walked to the circle, but another contestant, Kidd King, got there first. Having been passed once again, Mirani shared in a voiceover that she really needed that beat, so she had to remain strong. At the end of Kidd King, once again Mirani was passed, this time by Khundi Panda.

The fifth and last beat started, "I Got The Keys" by DJ Khaled, and the only other contestant left aside from Mirani, Kim Gyuha, immediately got into the circle, meaning Mirani would be the last to rap in the team. After Kim Gyuha ended, the show presented Mirani as "*the tenth rapper who kept getting the mic stolen*".

As it ended, the producers praised Mirani's performance. During the comments, producer Choiza asked if she meant to be the last; Mirani said that she did not; she wanted to participate before but was always passed over by someone else, so she just ended up being the last.

The team elimination started at the very end of episode three, with the producers picking out three contestants in danger, none of whom were Mirani, meaning she passed to the third round.

At the start of the fourth episode, the show's MC shared that for the fourth round, the team would be divided into three crews; he then called out three members to be the crew leaders; Mirani was not chosen. These leaders would then recruit two other members from their team to join their crew. Each crew got to pick a beat from the producer team they were on and add their own lyrics to it. After the three performances, the producers ranked their crews: the first one had all three contestants advance to the next round, the second had one contestant eliminated, and the third-placed crew had two contestants eliminated.

Forty-two minutes into the first episode, the show returned to Team Guljeot. Khundi Panda and Mckdaddy's crews had both chosen their teammates and announced their team was complete. Mirani approached Mushvenom and another contestant, blurred due to a scandal, and told them she was the only one left. Mirani was interviewed by the camera crew and shared that she was the only one not called for, so she decided to approach Mushvenom's table and make an offer to join them.

All the teams were called on stage. Rapper Khundi Panda shared in a confessional that if he'd taken Mirani into his team, he wouldn't be as confident as Mushvenom; however, he added that Mushvenom would be less confident with a team like his since their styles are quite different.

Mckdaddy also commented that even though he thought his team was the best, it all came down to preference.

The show's MC shared that Mushvenom and Mckdaddy's beat was the same, so he asked if that was any pressure for Mckdaddy, who answered that it wasn't much pressure since they had totally different styles.

The show cut back to the beat picking, where Mushvenom asked Mirani to rap to two different beats; after the second rap, Mushvenom decided to go with that beat and told Mirani that he did not think she was a weaker rapper; they just needed the right beat to fit her rap style. Mirani promised to do well, and Mushvenom explained that as long as they didn't make any mistakes, they could beat the other two teams. They began rehearsing, and Mckdaddy's crew realized the beat was the same as theirs. After seeing Mckdaddy's crew rehearsing, Mushvenom commented "*We're not going to be third*". He was then shown giving Mirani tips on how to move so she could "*show off her colors better*". Mirani shared that to her, Mushvenom was a great leader, and now all she needed to do was rap well.

Mirani started the performance, but unfortunately she made a lyrical mistake that caused her to stop rapping for a moment before restarting once again with as much confidence as when she started.

After the performance, the producers praised Mushvenom but made no comments on Mirani. The show's MC asked Mirani what she thought of the performance; Mirani answered that she hoped they would get first place but understood she had made a mistake, so she was both sorry and disappointed. Mushvenom shared in a confessional that when Mirani made the mistake, he tried to pump her up in hopes she would restart her rap; however, when she did restart, the timing was off, and Mushvenom had to beatbox at the end so she could finish the last hook. Producer Justhis shared that even though they made a mistake, considering the whole performance and the acapella beatboxing, they showed their artistic skills. When they got off stage, Mirani apologized to Mushvenom, to which he replied that it was ok since it's something that could happen to anyone.

The other two crews performed, and the producer took some time to decide on the placements. In the end, producer Justhis announced they would give first place to Mushvenom's crew, since the other two crews had made bigger mistakes and Mirani had quickly recovered from hers.

In episode six, the fourth round was announced as the Soundtrack Battle, usually known as the Crew Song Battle. The teams would once again be divided, this time into two, with the

winning crew remaining the same as the previous round and the second being composed of the two losing crews. Both crews were then given the same beat to perform to, and whichever crew won got to release their version of the song.

At this point in Team Guljeot, Mushvenom's crew still had one member blurred and mostly edited out during the preparations, which meant most of the footage focused on Khundi Panda's crew. When Mushvenom's crew was shown presenting their lyrics to the producers, Mirani's breathing was uneven, and neither she nor Mushvenom had memorized their lyrics yet. This caused the producers to warn them that this would immediately fail if the performance was that day.

Both Mirani and Mushvenom stepped on stage this time without the third blurred member. The show cut to a morning rehearsal, the day before the performance, where it was shown that the other member had to leave. Mirani said that they could do nothing about the situation and that they would have to perform as a duo. Khundi Panda also shared that having to beat a crew with one member missing was also negative for his crew.

Producer Hwi-min called Mushvenom and said they could adjust the beat for the duo; however, Mushvenom requested they keep it the same, and both he and Mirani would instead add another verse. Back on stage, Mushvenom explained that whether the added verse was good or not didn't matter; what did matter is that both of them should get more screen time.

The song was called "VVS", and their performance seemed to be going well; producer Park Gyu-jeong even said that it looked like a movie. At the end, Mushvenom nearly fell off the stage as Mirani rushed to his side, causing the producers to laugh. During the comments, producer Gaeko commented that they looked like a married couple that was touring the countries and made a stop there. Producer Paloalto shared that he was glad Mirani had made it through the Revival Round, because she made this performance melodious; he also added that their chemistry filled the vacant spot left by the missing member.

Both crews stepped on stage, and producer Justhis announced that Mushvenom's crew had won, meaning that both would move on to the next round and release "VVS".

The fifth round was announced at the start of episode seven as the diss battle round. The show's MC announced there were four members left in each team, making it eighteen contestants in total. Team DyWhy was given the advantage of picking which team they wanted to go up against, and they picked Team Guljeot. The members of Team DyWhy picked their opponents; Mirani was left for last, placing her against male rapper Untell; since he looked quite young, Mirani told him she would discipline him, but Untell talked back that he didn't even know her,

so he had to do some research. The teams decided that Mirani and Mushvenom's fifth round would be collaborative, meaning that they and their opponents could interact with each other.

During Team Guljeot's lyric check, producer Justhis told Mirani that she should take advantage of the time she had and prolong the sentences, as that would probably upset her opponent.

Mirani and Mushvenom were the third and last to perform. Mirani went first, solely focusing her rap on Untell, who seemed to be quite upset at some of the lyrics, most of which were based on his previous appearance in SMTM8, where he forgot his lyrics. Mushvenom's lyrics were also solely focused on his opponent, Kaogaii. However, when the time came for Kaogaii to rap, he started with Mushvenom, then turned to Mirani and questioned who she was since she had no career prior to SMTM. Untell's rap started with Mirani, mainly focusing on the same issue posed by Kaogaii, then rapped about Mushvenom.

Both teams stepped off the stage for the voting and later returned to hear the results. The teams were tied at 1-1, with Mirani and Mushvenom versus Kaogaii and Untell being the ones who could give their teams the win. Kaogaii shared that he was confident they could pull it off, but Mirani immediately answered that they didn't stand a chance; hearing this, Kaogaii turned to her, shocked, and the other members began to laugh. Mirani laughed a bit and jokingly asked if that was no longer "*the mood*". Mushvenom then said they would win in a singing tone.

The show's MC announced the winning team and Team Guljeot, Mirani turned to the rest of her team and hugged them. This win meant that no rapper would be eliminated from Team Guljeot.

One hour and twelve minutes into episode seven, the show's MC announced that the sixth round would be the live performances, and only ten out of the remaining fourteen contestants would actually get to participate in this round. The teams would decide this using the usual method: two contestants were given the same beat and added their own rap to it; then, before getting on stage, their team's producer would give the microphone to one of them, eliminating the other. Much like previous seasons, this round had two voting stages, one after the performance and a second one near the end of the round. The show's MC announced that Team CoPal would be against Team Guljeot.

Twenty-three minutes into episode 8, Team Guljeot was shown shopping for new clothes; every member got a new jacket and a pair of sneakers. After the shopping, the team met up in a cafe, where producer Justhis announced they would give the two granted performances to Mushvenom and Khundi Panda, which meant Mirani and the remaining team member,

Munchman, would have to fight for the last spot. Mirani explained that rather than choosing what they should do separately, she and Munchman would collaborate to find a middle ground where it would be easier to choose who would perform.

In a confessional, Mirani shared that she and Munchman were neighborhood friends and both worked on music together. The show presented some older photographs of the two together and footage post-first round in which they talked about each other, cementing their friendship.

Both Groovyroom producers were shown visiting Munchman in his studio, who shared with them that Mirani lived across the street; after a quick phone call, they walked over to Mirani's house to greet her. The two contestants showed their progress, and the producers commented that both raps were really solid, making it hard to decide which they would pick.

Mirani shared in a confessional that she was SMTM9's new face and that making it that far after nearly being eliminated in the second round was "*insane*". So she was going to work hard to receive the microphone and tell her story.

While preparing for the rehearsal, Mirani seemed to be off-tone; however, once on stage, she hit the note, and the producers congratulated her rehearsal performance. Munchman stepped on stage for his rehearsal and seemed lost as to where to stand, which clearly upset the producers.

The actual performance began with the other producers and contestants immediately guessing that the figure on stage was Mirani because she had longer hair and was much shorter than Munchman. The song was called "Achoo" and featured two collaborations: pH-1, an SMTM777 contestant, and Haon, who at this point had already won HSR2. The song's hook made the crowd dance along, with Munchman joining in from backstage. Mirani ended the song with "Shoutout to Munchman!"; Munchman smiled and screamed back from backstage. In a confessional, the Team Guljeot producers explained that they picked Mirani over Munchman because, while she kept going with confidence during the rehearsal, Munchman seemed to be getting tired.

Mirani's opponent was then announced as Sky Minhyuk; after his performance, Mirani stepped back on stage, and the first stage score was shown to them. The results were not displayed, but after Sky Minhyuk entered his team's dressing room, he shared that he had lost; on the other side, in Team Guljeot's dressing room, Mirani celebrated with her team by hugging them.

The show skipped to the end of the round, with Mirani and Sky Minhyuk standing on stage waiting for the second vote. Mirani won by quite a lot; she then went on to thank her team for all they had given her for that performance.

In episode nine, the show's MC started by explaining the semi-finals. He explained that the semi-finals would work like the previous round, but with only eight contestants left. Unlike the previous round, where the contestants' opponents were picked at random, this time the show's MC used cards with their names on them; if picked, they then had the advantage of choosing their opponents. Alas, Mirani was not one of the cards picked, and no one chose to go against her; so like before, she was once again left as one of the last two, which meant she was against Lil Boi, an already pretty established rapper who had participated in SMTM4. When asked by the show's MC how she would prepare for the performance, Mirani answered that after the desperation in the previous round, she would do her best to prepare well. Lil Boi commented that he had paid attention to Mirani's performances and did not think she was an easy opponent. He appreciated that she had a unique style and hoped they would have fun; both then shook hands.

About halfway through episode five, Mirani was announced as the next contestant to perform. In Team Guljeot's gathering to discuss what they would do in the performances, producer Lee Hwi-min shared that Mirani had shown a lot of growth throughout the show, and he wanted to display her beauty in the following performance. The producers presented her beat, and in a confessional, Mirani commented that even though her beat was simple, it was very lively.

Producer Park Gyu-jeong asked Mirani what kind of message she wanted to present with the beat; Mirani explained that she wanted to tell her story in a more "*catchy and trendy way*".

The show then cut to a bar, where Mirani was shown attending to a table. On her application form, Mirani shared that she wanted to win SMTM9 so she could make enough money for her mother to stop working at a bar. In a confessional, Mirani explained she just wanted to make money for her mother because when she was in high school, their income was cut and they could only afford "*red labels*", which usually refers to cheap and fatty foods. However, despite her situation, Mirani was the class president and even went to college to study music. Mirani's mom was then shown talking to her as they sat down for drinks; she shared with Mirani that she had watched her performances and was very proud of her; despite that, in a confessional, Mirani's mom shared that there were a lot of good artists already on the music market, so she was opposed to Mirani's pursuit of such a career. Mirani invited her mother to watch her performance for the first time, which she agreed to, as she was then shown to be in the audience.

Mirani's song was called "Part Time" and featured popular female South Korean singer, rapper, and DJ, Queen Wa\$abii. In the end, the crowd, producers, and contestants clapped, with a few commenting that the stage was great. Producer Park Gyu-jeong called it a story of growth and said he was touched by it.

After Lil Boi's performance, Mirani stepped back on stage for the first round voting announcement; much like last time, the results were not immediately shown; instead, the two contestants returned to the dressing rooms, where Mirani shared that she had lost. In a confessional, Mirani shared that she also thought Lil Boi's performance was cool, so she wasn't surprised the audience thought so too; meanwhile, Lil Boi thought that Mirani kept rising to the occasion, so he had no idea what the result would be.

The second voting announcement was only shared at the end of the episode. Both contestants stepped back on stage, where Lil Boi was shown to have gotten twice as many total votes as Mirani, completely shocking her as she opened her mouth and gasped before starting to laugh. Mirani shared that being against such a great performance was an honor, and then thanked her own producers for giving her the opportunity to perform; she had no regrets.

Mirani walked out of the studio and was interviewed outside, where she shared that she was really happy. In a confessional, she said that her journey so far had been surprising; when she was given the necklace in the first round, it felt like the world to her, and she was really happy; the comments she had received after "VVS" made her more confident about her rapping skills. Mirani promised to keep doing music and walked away from the cameras, waving with a smile.

This marked the end of women in SMTM9, this time making it to the semi-finals.

3.1.9 Show Me the Money 10

Producer Teams :

- **Team Tonawayum:** Yumdda & Toil
- **Team CoKo:** Gaeko & Code Kunst
- **Team Graynoma:** Gray & Mino
- **Team Tsla:** Zion.T & Slom

Show Me the Money 10: The Original, released in 2021, was the special anniversary season of Show Me the Money, celebrating 10 years and ten seasons; it also had the additional title of "10th Anniversary Project". This season once again saw an increase in applicants, now at 27000; this increase is mostly credited to the financial difficulties that rappers faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At this point, although COVID-19 was still a problem, it was much more controlled, and the series returned to a somewhat normal format.

One hour into episode one, the show gave a quick glance at online auditions from female rappers; it then showed the waiting room for the first round, where many female rappers were training. A female rapper seemed to be attracting other female contestants, who wanted her to listen to their rap. She was shown to have been featured in a video with well-known rapper Deepflow, which gained her a lot of traction.

Since, name of the female rapper shown, shared a bit about her life; she had lived in the city of Daejeon for twenty-six years and decided to move to Seoul in pursuit of a music career. While she couldn't make a living off of music, Since worked at a cafe, aside from rent, if she wanted to do music she also had to pay for the beats and mixing; however, in the end she barely got anything in return for her music. Since was now thirty and her father no longer supported her career choice, her financial struggles made it difficult to keep doing music.

The producer to judge her audition was Gaeko, who nodded his head along to her rap. After a bit, he put his hands on the sides of his face, and as she finished rapping, he clapped; the other contestants also cheered Since. Producer Gaeko shared that he had goosebumps while covering his mouth as a sign of shock; he gave Since the necklace, meaning she passed the first round. In a confessional, producer Gaeko praised her gaze and confidence and explained how incredible it felt to hear her rap.

Other female rappers were said to have also passed, as the show quickly skipped through a few, not giving them more than two seconds each.

Producer Toil explained that after seeing Mirani the previous year, he too wanted to work with other women. Producer Mino shared that this year it seemed like a lot of female rappers had their own color.

Following that, the show presented a group of foreign Korean Hip Hop fans, with most of them being female. Two of them were shown talking in the waiting area; unfortunately, in the Korean subtitles, it is clear that what they said was barely understood, with one of them even reading "@#%&\$*(@", followed by the confused expression of a male Korean contestant. The producer judging them was American-born UCLA graduate Toil. The first foreign female rapper attempted to rap in Korean and failed; the second also rapped in Korean, with a bit more confidence than the first, but nonetheless, producer Toil failed her; her name was shown after as Cat.

A few auditions later, a clearly feminine "*familiar face*" was shown among the other auditioners; she then introduced herself as Yuk Ji-dam. After SMTM3, she wasn't too well received in the public eye; however, in *Unpretty Rapstar*, she performed well. Yuk Ji-dam then

explained that it had been five years since *Unpretty Rapstar*; since she had gotten into the industry too young, Yuk Ji-dam wasn't prepared for the attention she received, which ended up overloading her, and so she quit making music. After being gone for so long, Yuk Ji-dam decided she would give it one last shot in SMTM10.

Producer Gray judged her audition; after a lyrical mistake from Yuk Ji-dam, he permitted her to restart her rap; unfortunately, after restarting her rap, Yuk Ji-dam would go on to make more mistakes until she finally finished her rap. Producer Gray didn't say anything immediately, giving it some thought before thanking her for the performance and walking away, eliminating Yuk Ji-dam. In a confessional, Gray admitted that he had his eyes closed during her audition because he was afraid that if he made eye contact, she would make a mistake again.

Yuk Ji-dam explained that she was too nervous but that it couldn't be helped..

In episode two, second round, the show presented Since by saying she was a rapper with a "*unique hairstyle*", since at the time it was braided. As she walked on stage, some of the contestants in the waiting room commented that she was really good and talented. Producer Gray questioned if she knew of her popularity and how the shoutout by Deepflow affected it, Since confirmed that Deepflow had helped her. Producer Gaeko asked Since about a line she had written in her application form, in which she said SMTM would be her last challenge. Since responded by confirming this would be the last time she would try to jump-start her music career because she had turned thirty. Producer Code Kunst praised her album "*Spring Rain*", with the other producers also agreeing it was great.

Since's performance was strong, showing a more dominant rapper than seen with most female rappers in SMTM. The producers seemed to enjoy it with the expectation of Team Tsla, who failed her.

The contestants backstage cheered and clapped as Since's performance came to an end. In their own confessionals, the producers commented on Since's unique voice and skills. On stage, producer Gaeko shared that it had been a while since he had heard such "*tight rap*", adding that with her tone, it just gave him goosebumps once again. Producer Zion.T explained that he had failed her because he wanted to see something even stronger. Hearing this, producer Gaeko joked that when she finished rapping and said "*Oh My...*" it did feel a bit weak; the other producers chimed in, calling it "*a thing of age*".

Team CoKo commented in a confessional that Since was a fresh face that did not resemble the previous female rappers on the show; Code Kunst called her a star that he would personally look to have on his team.

Halfway through episode two, a few eliminations were shown, including a few women; however, neither their name nor their performance were shown.

One hour and twenty-five minutes into episode five, the show's MC announced there were only 53 remaining contestants, of whom two seemed to be women; one of them was Since. The show's MC then announced the following round was the 1v1 round, this time with a new special rule: each producer team was given a Producer Pass to save a rapper of their choosing. Although the show introduced this as something totally new, it is similar to what was given to Yuja in SMTM8.

Close to the end of episode four, Since walked on stage alongside her opponent, Hwang Ji-sang, who had been nicknamed "*Yumdda's kid*". Producer Gaeko commented that the duo was really strong, with Since having three passes and Hwang Ji-sang having an All Pass. Since explained that she had picked Hwang Ji-sang because he was someone who "*matched my color*". Producer Gaeko shared that they were born 12 years apart; Hwang Ji-sang joked that they were the same age, making the other producers laugh and telling him to stop lying.

The two contestants were then shown training for the performance. They got to know each other better, Hwang Ji-sang asked Since a few questions, he offered to follow her on Instagram and allowed her to use informal language towards him. The two seemed to easily decide what beat they wanted and its hook, in which they would call themselves "*The Monkeys*" since both were born in the year of the monkey.

In the performance, the two played off each other's moves and raps. The producers stood from their seats, giving a standing ovation to the two rappers. In the waiting room, the other contestants clapped and cheered.

Producer Yumdda seemed to be crying, and as he wiped his eyes, the other producers joked that "*the flavor came out!*"; Yumdda called their performance amazing. Producer Gaeko shared that it had been a while since they had heard a female rapper that rapped that "*crazely*"; producer Code Kunst added that she didn't remind him of anyone since she was so unique. They then briefly commented on Hwang Ji-sang and how producer Yumdda was invested in him.

From behind the camera shot, a woman was heard screaming that it was a tie; this meant that the producers voted equally for both contestants and they would have to rematch.

Since and Hwang Ji-sang returned backstage, where they would prepare a second performance. Since said in a voiceover that she was nervous to repeat the performance. To prepare

herself before stepping on stage, Since was shown saying "*Let's just enjoy it; think as if you are here to perform at a concert.*".

They got on stage once more and performed their second song, this time with a slower beat and less interaction between the two. Once again, the producers clapped, and producer Toil said they did an amazing job. On Since, producer Code Kunst said that she could become the "*main character*" of SMTM10; he also added that he enjoyed her performance a lot.

A second tie was announced, which meant they had to rematch again; however, this time it would be a quick rematch, meaning they would pick a beat at the DJ booth next to the stage and perform a freestyle or pre-written rap over it, much like a cypher. Both made it through this third performance without any mistakes.

The producers were surprised that neither backed down and said they would vote once more; Hwang Jisung seemed visibly stressed and told Since he couldn't breathe properly; hearing this, Since told him to take one deep breath.

One of the producers' hands was shown pressing the Producer Pass bottom, and although their face was not shown, it was producer Yummda. Both contestants celebrated, along with the producers from Team Graynoma, who also got up. Hwang Ji-sang dropped to the ground on his knees and hid his face. Since went over to him, patted his back, and congratulated him. Since then explained to the producers that Hwang Ji-sang had been panicking while awaiting the results and had endured through it, two of the producers shared that they had no idea.

Since explained in a voice-over, that both of them wanted to pass together, so they worked hard for that to happen. Producer Code Kunst commented in a confessional that if they kept going, it would always be a tie; it would make no sense to not give them a Producer Pass. No other woman was shown to have passed this round.

Episode five began the fifth round, the team-picking round, with the producers' performances. The remaining 33 contestants voted on their favorite teams; much like in previous seasons, the teams' ranking had a special benefit: the team that ranked first could immediately pick their favorite contestant; Team Tsla was in 1st place.

Unlike previous seasons, the remaining rappers were given the opportunity to appeal to the judges with one last rap before the team selection. Since appealed with a more reggae rap and even ended it with a callout for her father to watch her. The producers talked amongst themselves, trying to see who wanted her on their team. No other woman performed during the appeal.

Content Analysis: Three South Korean rap competitions

After everyone's appeal, all the contestants returned to the stage. The show's MC announced that Team Tsla could now pick whichever contestant they wanted; however, the contestant they picked had the right to reject their offer. They did not call for Since.

The show's MC explained that this time around, each team would have five members; each contestant was given three minutes to hear all of the producer teams appeals before picking which team room they would enter; the producer teams would be "*locked*" behind bars while appealing. After every contestant picked whom they wanted to join, each room would step onto the stage, where the team producers would pick who they actually wanted on their team. If a contestant was not picked by the team they chose, they would return to the waiting room, and at the end, in case the teams were not full, they were given a second chance to be picked.

The producers immediately began to appeal as soon as Since stepped on stage; she approached Team Tsla first to congratulate them on their performance; she then walked to Team Graynoma and thanked Gray for giving her a shoutout in his radio show, which made producer Yumdda shout that she should thank him in the DM's, but now she had to move fast since they only had three minutes. Since walked into Team CoKo's "*cell*", while Team Tonawayum complained that she should give them at least twenty seconds, producer Gaeko closed the door, and Code Kunst said he would keep it closed while they talked. Over the bars, producer Mino said that his team picked her every time during the previous round. With twenty seconds left, Since stepped into Team Tonawayum's "*cell*". The other producer teams told them that they looked scary; nonetheless, Yumdda sincerely appealed to Since, promising her that they could make good music and that he would try to make her look "*cool*".

In the team picking room, Since pretended to enter Team Tonawayum's room, she turned and stepped into Team CoKo's, which seemed to have genuinely upset producer Yumdda. In a confessional, Team CoKo were really happy that she decided to pick them.

At the end of the team picking, the contestants in Team CoKo's room returned to the stage, and producer Gaeko announced that their first pick was Since, who happily joined them.

During Team Tonawayum's turn, a woman joined the other contestants who had chosen that team on stage; she was not chosen. She was once again shown during the second chance, but was not picked by anyone, which meant she was eliminated. This confirmed that Since was the last woman on SMTM10.

Episode six started with the explanation of the sixth round, the team song mission, in which one member of each team would be eliminated.

Team CoKo would be the third one to perform; however, before that, the show rolled some footage prior to their stage. After the team was made, the contestants awkwardly stood around, with Since telling them that this awkwardness was really entertaining. Their first team meeting seemed to be in the living room of a house. Since shared that she was not close with any of the contestants, the team's awkwardness continued until producer Gaeko broke it off with laughter. Producer Code Kunst shared that the team was too formal with each other and that what they really needed was to create a group chat without the producers, where they could share their music and thoughts.

The producers of Team CoKo took their team to a spa and then to a restaurant, where they shared the beat for that round. Since praised the beat, saying she was thankful to have joined their team.

During their rehearsals, the team members seemed to get close, especially with Ahn Byeong-woong, their youngest member, who Since said was the "*life of the party*". The rehearsal in front of the producers went as planned, with the producers praising their hard work. The camera crew then gathered Team CoKo to tell who the other contestants thought would be eliminated, and with seven out of the fifteen votes, it was Ahn Byeong-woong, who seemed emotionally hurt by this.

The main rehearsal on stage received several criticisms, none of them being Since's fault. In a voice-over, Since shared that they had been doing really well as a team, so the elimination wasn't even on her mind.

The song, named "Wake Up", started with Since singing the chorus by herself as her team lay on the ground; another rapper got up to rap, and the second verse was Since's. Throughout the performance, Since provided a few background vocals for the other rappers.

In the end, producer Mino commented that Since seemed to have really taken center stage; no other producer commented about her. In the end, producer Code Kunst shared that it was really hard to pick whom to eliminate because no one had made any mistakes and they worked perfectly as a team; despite that, they picked Ahn Byeong-woong. As he cried, Since patted his back and held onto his shoulder and told him that it was not the end.

As round six ended, the producers gathered and decided it was unfair to have the eliminated contestants cut out of the song, so for the first time in SMTM history, the songs were released with all five members.

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Round seven was announced as the diss battle round; Team CoKo had the advantage of picking which team they wanted to face and picked Team Graynoma.

At the start of episode seven, Since picked Geegoin, an older male rapper, as her opponent for the diss battle.

Before the diss battle, Team CoKo gathered next to the Han River, where the producers showed their members the car the winner of the show would get. They drove to a studio, where some of the members were put through a courage test; Since did not have to do it. During the rehearsals, Since was confident in her dissing skills so the show did not spend much time on her.

Even before the performance started, Geegoin dissed Since by saying that since she had nothing, there was nothing to diss; this caused a commotion in the crowd. However, the show's MC retorted that statement by sharing that Geegoin had become a fan of Since after his research. Geegoin shared that after listening to Since's album, he shared it with his friends, confessing that he indeed became a fan.

Since began the diss by joking with Geegoin's name and proceeded to rap about his failed career, even after having many strong connections in the industry. Geegoin started his diss by "*confessing*" his love for her; he then started his actual diss, which focused on Since's failed career as a rapper.

In the end, the results were announced, and Since won, which meant her team was tied at 1-1 with Team Graynoma. Unfortunately, Team CoKo would go on to lose the following two performances and had to eliminate another contestant, this time Oureal goat, who wished his team well and left the stage.

One hour and a half into episode seven, the show announced the eighth round was the first live performance, and the show's MC shared that Team CoKo would be up against Team Tsla. Unlike the previous season, the microphone selection was removed, so all fourteen remaining members would get to perform. Team CoKo only had three members; one would perform solo and the other two performed together.

Team CoKo picked Jo Gwang-il for the solo performance, which meant Since had to perform with Tabber. When shown the beat, Since commented that Code Kunst's beats were always great, so all she had to do was perform well. Both producers, as well as Since and Tabber, were shown eating out, and in this scene, previous praises from the producers towards both contestants were replayed.

In a confessional at her studio, Since explained that everyone gets stressed, no matter the life they lead, and she wanted to write a song that reflected on those moments. In a phone call with a friend, Since shared that she was worried about her career; her friend answered that they were in their thirties, so they were already expected to have a family and a career, which is probably what was making Since worry; she also reminded Since that when she was younger she had more determination. Since explained in a confessional that her friends already had stable careers, unlike her, and that seemed to create an "*unknown pressure*" which was probably why she got easily stressed, hopefully the song she made would help release some of that stress.

During the first rehearsal, Since had clearly not memorized her lyrics and made continuous mistakes; however, in the last stage rehearsal, they made it through without any problems.

Their song was called "Reset", and featured their team producer Gaeko. Since's rap shared her living situation and the thoughts others around her had about her failed career. Near the song's end, another guest appeared on stage, Kid Milli, a top-three contestant in SMTM777 and SMTM8 producer.

The crowd loudly applauded the performance. Backstage, the other teams also cheered; in Team Graynoma, contestant Be'O said that Since's voice was very charismatic, the others around him also agreed.

Unfortunately, at the end of the performance, one of the two had to be eliminated, much like in the microphone selection, but this time after the performance. The contestant eliminated was Tabber. The show's MC asked Since if she had anything she wanted to say; at first, she seemed lost for words as she raised and lowered her microphone. Since shared that she was grateful to have performed again and also thanked Tabber.

Near the end of the episode, the results of the crowd voting were revealed; with Team CoKo having won both performances, this meant they kept their two remaining contestants.

At the start of episode nine, round nine was announced as the semi-finals, which worked exactly like the previous season, with two voting rounds. Contestant Anadelight was the first to be randomly picked by the show's MC to choose his opponent, and he confidently called out Since. Since stepped forward with a little laugh, which made Anadelight say "*She seemed thrilled to be chosen*". In a confessional, Since explained that she was looking to pick him either way, so she was thankful he picked her.

Content Analysis: Three South Korean rap competitions

Anadelight was the first to perform in the semi-finals. Since was the second to perform, but before it showed her stage, the show cut to the preparations.

In the first team meeting, Since shared that she could draw more people to the stage than Anadelight. Producer Code Kunst explained that he had made a beat that reflected her famous album and song "Spring Rain", which was a very lonely song, so he made a continuation of it. Since shared that she loved the song the moment she heard it, she explained that the previous "rain" hurt, but this one would be a warm story about her family.

Since explained that the most important thing in her life was her family, she was then shown having a meal with her younger brother. In a confessional, Since shared that she never got to treat him to a proper meal, so this was her chance. Once again, Since's hardships were shown as she talked with her brother. Since shared that she didn't like calling and mostly heard about her father's life through her younger brother, who then offered to call him right there.

Since shared with her father that she had made it into the semifinals; however, in his silence, she said that maybe he wasn't interested; hearing this, Since's father said he did care and wished her good luck.

Since trained alone at her studio, the song didn't seem right, so she kept rewriting it and was worried about whether she could memorize it all. During the lyrics check with the producers, producer Gaeko commented that he was surprised that Since had to revise her lyrics eighteen times. As she showed her rap, it was clear she had not memorized her lyrics, as she kept making mistakes and looking at her phone. The main rehearsal was shortly shown. Anadelight was watching from the crowd's point of view and commented that she sounded good, but he was better and should win due to his clearer rapping delivery.

Since's song was called "FACE TIME". The performance started with a short bit of her previous song, "Spring Rain" before it cut to the new one. Since's featured artists were pH-1, an SMTM777 contestant, and Giriboy, an SMTM3 contestant and SMTM9 producer. Basick, a contestant on Team Tonawayum, said that both featured artists were "*woman heart stealers*".

At the end of the performance, the other producer praised the performance, calling it amazing and breathtaking.

Both contestants stood on stage and awaited the results of the first voting round. They appeared on a screen but were kept blurred for suspense. The two walked back into the dressing rooms, where Since shared she had won, her team celebrated with a hug. In a confessional, Since said that she could only be half happy as there was still a second voting round to be announced.

One hour and fifty-two minutes into the episode, Since and Anadelight were called on stage for the second voting round announcement, which Since won, meaning she had made it into the finals. Since hugged her producers and then went over to Anadelight and hugged him too. The show's MC asked Since how she felt about this win; once again, Since thanked her producers and promised to work harder to perform in the finals.

Episode ten, the final round, was televised live, with a few pre-recorded performances due to COVID-19 guidelines. This final round was divided into two parts: the first part of the finals had a performance from each of the four finals contestants, then the onsite voting was announced; the second part was a second performance from each contestant, and at the end were the voting results and the winner announcement. This round had both on-site voting, which was the first to be announced, and SMS voting, which accounted for sixty percent of the votes.

The episode started with the contestants meeting up to receive their top four rings and show support for each other as the finalists.

Each one of the finalists was announced as clips of them from throughout the season played; they then performed a short version of their most popular song on the show. Since performed her verse from "Wake Up".

The contestants met up the night before the performances to choose their performance order. The contestants would all get to say which order they preferred; however, only the contestant with the most accumulated points from the first live performance to the semi-finals had a say on their performance order. That contestant was Since, who chose to somewhat keep the order they wanted but switched spots with Koonta, meaning she was the third to perform while he would go first..

In a pre-recorded segment, at a meeting with the producers, Since shared that she did not think she could have made it to the finals; this prompted producer Code Kunst to say "*I knew you'd be the main character*", then joked that if he had said that and she had failed that it would have been weird; causing the other two in the room to laugh.

In a confessional, Since admitted that she was proud that she made it into the finals, especially in a season that was commemorating the 10th anniversary of the show.

Some footage was played to show how throughout the missions Since's health had deteriorated; the producers offered her a nice meal, as producer Code Kunst said, "*We need to maintain her health.*".

Producer Code Kunst shared that he had made two beats that would keep people talking even after the show ended, so he had made two beats for her to show two different sides of herself. After listening to the first beat, Since shared in a confessional that she really felt like they had listened to her. Producer Gaeko asked Since if she regretted joining the show in any way. Since rejected that thought, saying that she was happy to join in any way because the other option was to not do so and quit on her music career.

Since explained that she thought of Team CoKo as a second family and had learned a lot from them, the best moment she had was stepping on stage, and she hoped that she would spend her thirties doing this.

The first song was called "Up". The featured artists were Woo, an SMTM6 contestant, and Jay Park, an SMTM6 and SMTM7 producer. Once the performance ended, the show's MC asked the crowd to vote for her as a countdown was shown. After the countdown, Since thanked the crowd and walked backstage.

After a special performance from eliminated contestants, the ranking for the first round of live audience voting was announced, with Since coming in first place, much to her surprise, as her mouth dropped and was quickly covered by her hand. When asked how she felt, Since answered that she was thankful and that she did not expect to come first.

Before Since's second performance, another pre-recorded segment was played; this time it was a meeting between her and her father. Since's father asked how she had been, to which Since answered she was fine, then turned to see her father was crying, which made her reassure him she was fine. Since's father explained in a confessional that she had been through a lot of hardships alone, seeing her stand strong made him both proud and sorry. Since's father also shared that he worked hard to raise her without a motherly figure; he had high expectations of her, so when she told him she wanted to pursue music, he kicked her out, and they stopped contacting each other for two years. Since's father admitted that hearing her lyrics mention that she felt sorry for him broke his heart; however, he would support and cheer for her now.

Since's second song was called "SIGN". Since's father stood in the crowd holding a sign for her as she rapped about her past and showed hope for their future. The song's only featured artist was Mirani, who had appeared in the previous season alongside Since.

The performance ended, and producer Code Kunst stepped on stage. The show's MC asked him how he felt about the performance, and he answered that he was really proud. Producer Gaeko joined them on stage as the show's MC shared that he had been crying before the

performance even started. Gaeko answered that he felt a rush of emotions when he remembered how much Since wanted to make it to the finals so that her father would finally accept her choice to pursue music.

After Since, Jo Gwang-il was the last to perform. The show's MC announced the voting had ended and there would be a special performance from producers throughout the show's history while the votes were counted.

Following the special performance, the teams producers and their remaining members stepped on stage, and the third and fourth placements were announced first. Koonta was in fourth place, and Be'O was third. Which left Since and Jo Gwang-il, both from the same team; this meant that Team CoKo's producers had already won, and for the first time on the show, both top two finalists were from the same team.

The two contestants stood on stage, along with the producers, one on each side. The show's MC asked Since if she thought she was the winner; Since answered that it didn't matter whether she won or not; she was just happy to be there and thankful for the experience. The show's MC commented that funnily enough, both Jo Gwang-il and Since's fathers were standing side by side.

After some stalling from the show's MC, he finally announced that the winner was Jo Gwang-il. While Jo Gwang-il held on to the cardboard with his prize-winning and thanked the show, Since held onto the flowers. She then also gave her thanks to the producers for helping her and to the audience for listening to her songs.

Producer Code Kunst shared some words on the two contestants, with him saying that Since was "*hungry*" to stand on stage, which gave him the urge to get her to the finals; to him, she had done a "*magnificent job, right till the end*". Producer Gaeko praised both of the contestants.

In Since's final statement, she once again thanked everyone, including Jo Gwang-il.

The show ended with hugs between the top four contestants and their teams and a final scream of "*Show Me the Money!*".

3.1.10 Show Me the Money 11

Producer Teams :

- **Team Slay:** Jay Park & Slom
- **Team R. Jus:** R. Tee & Justhis
- **Team Quiolin:** The Quiett & Leellamarz
- **Team Grillz:** Lil Boi & Groovyroom (Park Gyu-jeong and Lee Hwi-min)

Show Me the Money 11: The New One, released in 2022, saw the auditions once again held both in Seoul and Los Angeles, something that hadn't been repeated since SMTM6. This season had 30,000 applicants, once again raising its number to the highest it had ever been. The format was the same as in previous seasons, with most COVID-19 precautions still in place.

The show started with the usual introduction of the producer teams. Team Quiolin was the first to judge; during producer Leellamarz's judging, the first woman appeared. She started by making noises and laughing; her rap consisted of wordplay and rhymes, and she also used gestures to match the lyrics. Producer Leellamarz gave her the necklace, passing her to the second round.

The show called her a "*rapper with a unique voice*" and her name was finally revealed when producer Leellamarz commented in a confessional that "*Damini left a really deep impression*". A bit of background on the rapper was revealed; she had been in Huckberry P's "Wolves" and received a lot of shoutouts from well-known male rappers. She was the new "*Rising Rookie of the Hip Hop Scene*". In their separate confessionals, the producers talked about her voice and how unique it was. After receiving the necklace, Damini promised to work hard for the next round.

Thirty-eight minutes into episode one, on the line outside of the audition stadium, a female figure is shown with their face blurred. A lot of other contestants look at the person in shock, pointing and taking pictures. A few interviews with contestants were shown, where a television producer asked them about the person, keeping the name bleeped out; the contestants were shocked, and one of them shared that even though he had seen her online audition, the surprising thing was that she actually showed up.

The person was then unblurred and shown to be Lee Young-ji, the winner of HSR4, who had taken over YouTube and variety shows. Producer The Quiett, her mentor in HSR3, commented on Lee Young-ji by saying that he had seen something great in her, and as soon as she won HSR3, she became a star. Lee Young-ji admitted she had kept in touch with him until that point. The show teased that the producer judging her would be The Quiett but also gave a second option, producer Jay Park, who she had said, in HSR3, was her "*ideal type*". Lee Young-ji, on the other side, wanted to avoid being judged by The Quiett. The show cut to the other auditions before showing who would judge Lee Young-ji.

One hour and fourteen minutes into the first episode, the show presented the female contestants as a group. One of them stood out from the others, a high school student from SOPA. Producer Park Gyu-jeong was judging her; he listened to her rap with his mouth half open, as if in a trance-like state. As she finished her rap, Park Gyu-jeong smiled and gave her the necklace. In a confessional, Park Gyu-jeong said that she had the characteristics he was looking for: a nice voice and good lyrics. The female contestant held the necklace up and thanked the show; her name was displayed as Goeun.

Close to the end of episode one, it returned to Lee Young-ji, where the show presented some extra footage of other contestants' reactions to her joining the show. Most of the reactions this time were negative, in which they even wondered why she had joined the show.

Lee Young-ji explained that people join SMTM for a myriad of reasons, and just because she wasn't "*starving*" when it came to money did not mean she wasn't "*hungry*" in terms of music. In those regards, Lee Young-ji admitted that she was not satisfied with her music career, so she was "*starving*" to reignite it. Lee Young-ji shared that she started really young with her participation in HSR3. With the fame, she had to figure out who she was and what message she wanted to spread with her music, but it was becoming too much for her. She still loved music, but sometimes it was hard to feel that way. With SMTM, she hoped that she could "*reignite that flame with music*".

Finally, the producer judging Lee Young-ji was producer Jay Park, which she said was a relief; however, as he failed contestants in front of her, Lee Young-ji said that the possibility of not making it through dawned on her.

Team Quiolin and producer Slom stopped judging their contestants and got closer to hear Lee Young-ji's audition. Producer Jay Park was surprised to see Lee Young-ji; in a confessional, he commented that even if someone was famous, they had to meet his standards in order to pass.

Lee Young-ji rapped with confidence and made no mistakes. Producer Jay Park clapped at the performance and handed her the necklace. A few contestants were shown giving positive comments, clapping, and cheering.

The first episode ended by showing a few extra people who had gotten the necklace; none of them were women.

Episode two started with the show's MC congratulating the one hundred and eight contestants who passed the first round and warning that for the second round, only forty-four

would make it through. This time the second round once again served as a way to make the teams, much like in season nine.

Due to the fact that the casting was so early, the producers were set to perform before the second round.

Forty-two minutes into episode two, Damini was announced as the next contestant. While she didn't appear, producer R. Tee shared that he didn't entirely like her music, but after paying attention to her lyrics, he was positively surprised.

Damini entered the stage, and producer The Quiett commented on how polarizing she was; a few clips of other contestants were then shown, where they either loved or hated her. On the comment made by The Quiett, Damini answered that it was expected and that if she wanted to be liked by everyone, she wouldn't have chosen to do Hip Hop; however, she did not want to be a rapper that was uncomfortable to listen to, so she would work hard to perform well.

Damini's performance was strong, and all the producers seemed to be enjoying it. At the end, an All Pass appeared on the screen behind Damini; producer Leellamarz repeated a few times "Damini is the best". During the producer's comments, Leellamarz shared that the producers had been talking about her tone, and he thought that her lyrics shouldn't be judged by her unique tonality; to him, she was a great lyricist.

Producer Lee Hwi-min said that it wouldn't be fun for Damini to pick Team Quiolin since producer Leellamarz was the one that had passed her in the first round, but despite that, Damini immediately chose them. Team Quiolin was happy that Damini had chosen them with such determination.

In episode three, Goeun was called on stage for her second round; this time her name was displayed as Goney, her stage name, which will be used from now on. Goney took small steps up to the stage and greeted the producers with a big smile; the producers greeted her back, commenting that she had great energy.

Producer The Quiett shared that all the producers looked through the contestant who passed the first round and looked at her SoundCloud. A scene of the producers looking through her audition on Soundcloud was then shown. They praised Goney's rapping skills, with producer Justhis adding that she had a lot of potential. While listening to a song on Soundcloud, producer Jay Park got up and danced to it; producer R. Tee said he wanted to meet her producer, but was surprised to see that she produced her own beats.

Back on stage, producer Park Gyu-jeong said that he had listened to her music outside the show, and that he really liked how she fused music with her life. Hearing this, producer R. Tee said that he had listened to her before going to bed, and that she was someone that he was looking forward to. This caused the other producers to joke that R. Tee took SMTM way too seriously. Team Grillz said they had listened to her three hundred times, which caused producer Justhis to tell them to just go do drill, the music genre they were known for. Producer Lee Hwi-min hit back by saying that he should go do his ballads then.

The second round song was produced by Goney. The producers nodded along to the beat. In the waiting room, Lee Young-ji seemed surprised to hear Goney's voice. The performance ended with Goney nearly breaking into tears; back in the waiting room, the contestants screamed "Don't cry!". Lee Young-ji and Damini also seemed emotional with the performance, with Lee Young-ji commenting that she could really feel Goney's sincerity.

Goney got three passes, with Team Quiolin being the only team that failed her. Producer Jay Park started the comments by saying that her beat was perfect, as it really fit her rap. Producer R. Tee went straight to his appeal for her to join them; he explained that he believed in her positive energy and loved her music. Producer Park Gyu-jeong also appealed by saying that "as a fellow musician", he hoped they could work together.

Producer Lil Boy shared that so far Team R. Jus had been stealing all the contestants that they wanted, adding that producer R. Tee didn't even glance their way when recruiting the contestants.

Goney stepped forward but didn't know which team to pick. Producer R. Tee said that they were great mentors with great music, so she should join them. On the other hand, producer Lee Hwi-min shared that since he was a mentor on HSR two times, he knew what it was like for contestants her age to deal with appearing on TV so young and that mental health was really important; he added that they would help her with whatever she needed.

Goney said she had decided and picked team Grillz; producer R. Tee said he loved her performance as she turned to walk out of the stage. Goney thanked the producers and walked away with a big smile. In a confessional, producer Park Gyu-jeong shared that he really wanted her on their team. Outside of the studio, Goney shared that she was really happy and would work harder for the third round.

Another female contestant was shown later on grouped with other contestants that were showing off their "*special*" skills; hers was singing. A small part of her rap was shown; she received two passes and chose to join Team Quiolin. Her name appeared in the subtitles as Vekoel.

The last second round contestant was Lee Young-ji; in the waiting room, the contestants cheered. Producer Jay Park shared with the others that Lee Young-ji's live performance was great; after Jay Park's words, a video with the public's positive reactions to her first audition was played.

In their separate confessionals, two producers gave their opinions on Lee Young-ji: Producer The Quiett commented that she was incredibly influential, and producer Justhis joked that whichever team had Lee Young-ji was the winning team.

On stage, producer Jay Park questioned why Lee Young-ji had joined, since rappers who are already famous have more to lose by joining the show; Lee Young-ji explained that she saw the show as a challenge and that she hoped to gain some self-realization by participating. Producer Lee Hwi-min asked Lee Young-ji about how she felt about the hate she had received and what she expected to showcase in SMTM11; Lee Young-ji answered that she wanted to show what she could do in a variety of ways. Footage of other contestants and online comments speaking negatively of Young-ji was shown; it then cut to Lee Young-ji's pre-show screening, where she shared that people tried to hold her to higher standards, and that made her feel like she had to perform way better than everyone else; however, Lee Young-ji saw SMTM11 for what it was, a "*a rap game*" that sought out the "*best rapper*", and she was confident in her rapping skills.

Producer R.Tee asked Lee Young-ji why she wanted to avoid The Quiett in the first round; Lee Young-ji explained that The Quiett felt more like a relative and that outside of special events, it didn't feel right to contact him. Lee Young-ji added that he had seen the most inexperienced side of her. The Quiett remembered HSR3 differently, saying that at the time she had only been training for six months and in the end won it all.

Producer Lil Boi asked her why she only wanted to get two passes in the second round; Lee Young-ji answered that she only wanted The Quiett to pass her, but explaining the rest before the performance didn't feel right. Producer R. Tee asked her what the second round rap was about, and Lee Young-ji answered that it was "*the story of all of us*".

The producers told her to start, but Lee Young-ji requested a moment to calm down. In the waiting room, Vekoel commented that Lee Young-ji must have been really nervous.

Lee Young-ji's rap was jazz-inspired, with her lyrics reflecting the feelings of the contestants on the show. Lee Young-ji got an All Pass, and all the producers commented positively on her voice and rap, even requesting an encore.

Producer Leellamarz commented that at the end, when she was "*riding the melody, it was so sexy*". The other producers were surprised at the control she had over her voice and how soulful it sounded.

All the producers tried to appeal as best they could, with the exception of producer The Quiett, who waited for them to stop and then told her that it was great to hear her again. He could feel like she had grown in many aspects, but still had more aspects of herself that needed development.

Lee Young-ji stepped closer to the teams and explained that she had already made up her mind in the very first interview, so she picked Team Slay since they were the ones to give her the necklace in the first round.

In a room with a board full of messages from other rappers, Lee Young-ji wrote down that she hoped people would hear her sincerity through her music. She ended with a promise to show an improved version of herself.

Near the end of episode three, the teams had to eliminate extra contestants from the teams; this was done with an acapella rap, which was not fully shown. In the end, the female team members were the following: Team Quiolin had Goney; Team R. Jus had a previously unseen contestant, Lee Seul-yi; Team Quiolin had Damini; and Team Slay had Lee Young-ji.

At the start of episode four, the show's MC explained the third round, which was the beat cypher, with a twist. This time, the beat wasn't played by a DJ but instead by two drummers playing live original beats. On a round platform stage, there were two microphones, one red and one blue. The contestants would stand around the stage, and as soon as the first microphone lit up, they had to run to get it. After the first rapper ended, the second microphone would light up for someone else to rap. There were a total of twenty-two matchups; the producers and special guests, consisting of eliminated contestants from the first and second rounds, would pick a winner; the loser had not been immediately eliminated. There would only be three eliminations per team at the end of the round.

The first rapper from Team R. Jus and the first female in the third round was Lee Seul-yi. Her second-round performance was shown to have been very solid; however, she only got one pass. As Lee Seul-yi performed, Goney and Damini were readying themselves to step on stage the moment the second microphone lit up; both ran on stage and got to the microphone at about the same time, but Damini took it. Damini started to rap but messed up her lyrics, picking back up soon after. Despite that, the damage had been done, and Damini finished her rap by saying that it sucked. Other rappers commented that Damini was probably nervous or just inexperienced. Lee

Seul-yi won, which seemed to leave Damini disappointed. Damini apologized to her team, which supported her by saying that it was okay.

Throughout the episode, both Goney and Lee Young-ji tried to grab the microphones during different beats; unfortunately, neither of them was successful in most attempts. One of the male rappers performed with a reggae beat and no other contestant picked up the other microphone; this meant they immediately won and there would automatically be a contestant left without a beat. The show's MC warned that there would only be two more rounds; both women had yet to rap, and since there were five people left, that meant they both had to rap in either of the last beats or immediately receive a loss.

Team Grillz admitted they were worried for Goney; however, she was sure that she would pick up the microphone before the round ended.

The first of the two beats began, and two male contestants ran on stage; Jambino was the faster one. Lee Young-ji and another male contestant stepped back because the beat did not work for them. Goney and a male contestant readied themselves to run on stage before the second microphone lit up. In a confessional, Goney explained that at that point the BPM did not matter; what did matter was that she got her hands on the microphone.

As soon as the microphone lit up, Goney ran and grabbed it before her male opponent could; this act received a loud cheer from the special guests.

Goney's rap seemed to be well received by the special guests, who even kept screaming her name after her performance ended. Goney won; however, she shared that it did not feel great; through the round, she kept getting the microphone stolen and got nervous.

The last beat came on, and Lee Young-ji failed to grab the microphone both times. Meaning she had lost her chance to perform and had lost the round, putting her at risk of being eliminated from the show.

The show's MC explained that although Lee Young-ji didn't pick up the microphone, she would be given a chance to rap to a random beat. Lee Young-ji stepped back on stage, and in a voiceover, she explained that she was mad at herself for not trying harder to get the microphone.

The special guests and the other contestants seemed to enjoy the performance, displaying their enjoyment through cheers and grooving to the beat. After ending, Lee Young-ji just left the stage and sat back down with her team, not saying a word.

The show's MC stepped on stage and commented that after hearing Lee Young-ji, it was "*even more lamentable*". The producers and special guests spoke extremely highly of Lee Young-ji's rap, and all thought it was unfortunate that she did not get a chance to go against an opponent.

The eliminations began; Team Grillz was the first to pick, and Goney was not eliminated. However, when it came time for Team R. Jus to eliminate three of their members, they eliminated Lee Seul-yi, even though she had won the round. Producer Justhis explained in a confessional that even though she had won the round, she did not have the charms that the losing rappers had. Lee Seul-yi said that she joined SMTM11 to gain inspiration and had gained everything she could. Team Quiolin did not eliminate Damini. Team Slay did not eliminate Lee Young-ji. In a voiceover, Lee Young-ji said that she was sorry as a teammate and was upset at herself.

At the start of the fifth episode, the show's MC announced that the contestants would be separated into two different grades based on whether they had won or lost the previous round; the two grades were "Real" and "Fake" rappers. Damini received "Fake" and Goney received "Real"; the last person to get their grade was Lee Young-ji, who got "Fake". When asked by the show's MC why she had not grabbed the microphone, Lee Young-ji explained that she had just foolishly lost her turn but was ready for this round.

Round four was announced as the team crew battle; the teams, now with eight members, would be divided in two and made to face each other. Whichever side of the team lost, two members were eliminated from the show. The show's MC announced the two rappers that would lead each side of the team; Lee Young-ji was the only woman chosen, and she would lead the "Fake" rappers on team Slay.

Team Quiolin was the first team shown. Since their team wasn't perfectly divided, one of the "Real" rappers had to join the "Fake" rappers' team. In the "Fake" crew, Damini explained that since their crew already had a set BPM in mind, they needed a rapper that could match it. The "Fake" rappers' crew had problems picking the beat, which then turned into more problems with the "Real" rapper, who kept forgetting his lyrics; during most of the training footage, Damini was on screen but not focused since she was training mainly by herself. During the "Fake" crew's interim check, producer Leellamarz seemed to love Damini's verse, which was shown to be the last in the performance.

During the performance of the "Fake" crew, a lot of mistakes were made by all the male contestants; however, Damini took charge of her rap and flawlessly made it through, much to the enjoyment of the producers and the rest of the team.

Content Analysis: Three South Korean rap competitions

Producer Lil Boi shared that he was disappointed with Damini's last performance, but the performance she put on this round had him on cloud nine; it really made him think that she had no "*middle ground*", which made it even more charming. Producer Justhis agreed that he too felt like he was on cloud nine.

The "Fake" crew lost and eliminated two members, none of whom were Damini, meaning she moved on to the next round.

The second team to perform would be Team Grillz. Goney was in the "Real" rapper's crew and remained in it even after some members moved to the fake crew. During the interim check, the producers warned the "Real" crew that their performance was boring; Roh Yun-ha, the team leader, said that Goney had faltered due to the pressure. Goney trained with the team, but she forgot her lyrics. After a second attempt, she once again forgot her lyrics and started to cry. Goney tried to explain that she was too worried and discouraged, but Roh Yun-ha kept comforting her, which helped.

In the "Real" crew performance, Goney made no mistakes; in spite of that, another male contestant did make an obvious lyrical mistake. Producer Jay Park asked Goney if she was a high school student, and she confirmed this. Jay Park explained that she had a great presence but it was clear the beat was too much for her; nonetheless, he enjoyed the performance. Producer The Quiett blamed the imbalance of the performance on the beat, saying it was the wrong option.

The "Real" crew lost; the first contestant eliminated was the one who had made a lyrical mistake. The second contestant was Goney; producer Park Gyu-jeong explained that even though she did well, some of her rap felt old-fashioned. In a confessional, producer Lil Boi commented that Goney didn't show the appropriate skills for the beat, so she was eliminated.

Goney shared that she gained a lot of experience, and just getting to the fourth round was like a dream. Goney was happy her potential was recognized and said she only had positive memories from being on the show. Outside the studio, Goney promised to improve herself.

The last team to perform was Team Slay. The show's MC asked the teams how they had the same beat since the "Real" crew would have picked it first. Lee Young-ji explained that she had to beg the other crew's leader to let her have it. The scene of her asking for the beat was then shown; although initially the "Real" crew's leader did not want the other team to have the beat, after some flattery and begging from Lee Young-ji, he finally caved in. The two teams began rehearsing, with Lee Youngji quickly deciding her crew's theme. One of Lee Young-ji's teammates took her up on her offer to teach him how to twerk, so their concept was decided in only ten minutes. The "Fake" crew quickly rehearsed the movements and rap, with Lee Young-ji

herself giving a lot of ideas. In their own confessionals, the other team members praised Lee Young-ji's ability to lead and make decisions so quickly.

The "Fake" crew was the second to perform. As they stepped on stage, Team R. Jus commented to each other that the beat was perfect for Lee Young-ji. Unlike with the "Real" crew, this performance had higher energy, and the raps were more powerful. During her verse, Lee Young-ji forgot the lyrics and continued to rap with a verse from another song she'd been on.

During the comments, producer Slom said that even though Lee Young-ji made a mistake, she kept rapping the full sixteen bars. Producer Jay Park finished this comment by saying that it felt more intentional than a mistake. Producer R. Tee said that despite the mistake, she pulled it together and showed an amazing rap. Producer Jay Park finished his thoughts by saying that, in the end, the fact that she made a mistake made her stand out more.

The "Fake" crew won, and Lee Young-ji thanked the other members for covering her mistake. Backstage, Lee Young-ji said, "*Today was the most humiliating and pathetic day of my life.*".

At the end of round four, there were only two teams with women: Team Quiolin with Damini and Team Slay with Lee Young-ji.

In episode six, the fifth round was announced as the team song mission. The show's MC explained that every team had one contestant eliminated before the performance and had to eliminate another contestant after the performance, which meant they would go from teams with six members to teams with four. This season, the song mission was performed in front of a live audience for the first time; however, there was no audience voting. Like the previous season, the contestant was eliminated after the performance was maintained in the official release of the song.

Team Quiolin was the second team to perform, but before they did, the show presented footage of their preparations. Team Quiolin went to the Dongmyo Flea Market, where they looked through clothes to try to find "Hip Hop". They then left a building with a large room, where they sat down to hear the producers. Producer The Quiett explained that they would have to eliminate a contestant that day; he gave them five minutes to prepare, then returned to hear their raps over the beat that would be used for the fifth round.

During Damini's rap, producer Leellamarz seemed to be once again loving it, nodding his head with a big smile on his face.

Content Analysis: Three South Korean rap competitions

At the end of all the raps, producer The Quiett started announcing the contestants that had passed. The first person announced was Damini; producer The Quiett explained that hers was the best rap they had heard that day and that it fit well with their beat. The Quiett said that Damini's rap could be the highlight of the song.

During the final rehearsal, once again, producer The Quiett reiterated that Damini's verse should be the focal point of the song. The Quiett prepared some moves for Damini to do during the performance; contestant Kim Jae-wook offered to do one of the moves since Damini felt uncomfortable doing it, but was immediately rejected by producer The Quiett, who even told him that his rap was the most boring part of the song.

In the on-stage rehearsal, Damini trained her every move, trying to perfect her performance. In a confessional, the Team Quiolin producer admitted they were afraid Damini couldn't pull it all off since they had given her such a big part in the song. In her confessional, Damini said that she had to carry the performance, which meant having confidence in herself so she could perform well no matter what happened.

The song was called "Ajushi". The performance went as planned, with Damini really taking center stage at the end of the song. In the dressing rooms, the other teams and producers solely praised Damini's performance.

Team Slay went right after Team Quiolin. Their preparations began with some physical exercise, a jump rope challenge. Lee Young-ji held the rope alongside producer Slom, while the other team members and producer Jay Park tried to jump at the same time. After the exercise, the team met at a bar, where producer Slom revealed the beat they would use.

Sometime later, Team Slay gathered to present the raps they had made. Lee Young-ji was the first one to showcase her rap; producer Jay Park said that her impact on stage was great. Unlike Team Quiolin, Team Slay immediately announced the eliminated contestant, which was not Lee Young-ji.

During Team Slay's practice, even though she was the youngest, Lee Young-ji took charge of the team. The other members were thankful that she had a lot of TV experience. In a rehearsal with producer Jay Park, Lee Young-ji gave a lot of ideas on how they should look for the performance. One of the team members injured himself two days before the performance, so the team had to accommodate the performance for him.

Team Slay's song was called "WE". Lee Young-ji was the first contestant to rap after Jay Park started the song with the hook. As she rapped, the show cut to the backstage reactions of

other contestants and producers, who were all amazed by her stage presence. As the performance went on, Lee Young-ji also displayed more of her dancing skills and coordinated moves with the other members.

After the song ended, the contestants in the waiting rooms gave some of their opinions. On Lee Young-ji, contestant Don Malik said she had really "*sharpened her knives*".

At the end of the performances, each team eliminated a member; neither woman was eliminated in this round.

Near the end of the episode, the show's MC announced round six would be the diss battle. This time the format of the diss battle was changed; there would be two 1:1 rounds and then one round in which all members would participate, a team diss round. This round was voted on by an audience of special guests, once again consisting of contestants who had been eliminated in the previous rounds. The team round was worth more, which meant that a team could lose both single rounds, but if they won the team round by a considerable amount, then they could win the whole round six. The losing teams had to eliminate one member.

Team Grillz chose Team Slay as their opponent, which meant Team R. Jus and Team Quiolin were automatically paired against each other.

At the start of episode seven, the matchups between Team Grillz and Team Slay were announced, with Roh Yun-ha picking Lee Young-ji as his opponent. Then Team R. Jus and Team Quiolin were shown picking. Damini wasn't picked, therefore she would only participate in the team diss round.

Team Grillz and Team Slay stepped on stage, where Team Grillz got the advantage of picking whether to rap first or second; they picked to go second as a way to better answer the disses.

Both teams' preparations were shown. Team Slay prepared a lot of props for their rap, while Team Grillz relaxed and drank tea. While preparing how to diss their opponents, Roh Yun-ha shared that his mother was a fan of Lee Young-ji but didn't even know she was a rapper until she watched the show. Another point he made was that Lee Young-ji also hadn't released an album.

Lee Young-ji was the first to perform. Lee Young-ji's rap started by making fun of his more feminine name and the fact that he was so young. Lee Young-ji offered for Roh Yun-ha to become her road manager, which seemed to make him happy.

Roh Yun-ha was the second to perform. He stepped forward, pulled out a scarf, and put it above his head like Lee Young-ji; he then pulled out identical black glasses to the ones Lee Young-ji had. In his rap, Roh Yun-ha mainly mentioned the fact that Lee Young-ji had done everything but rap, focusing on the fact that she was more well-known as a comedian. He also warned that if her team lost, someone else other than her would be eliminated, and he joked about the fact that since he was against her, the video of their battle would get more views, so he promoted his album.

Both teams stood on stage for the first voting announcement. The show's MC announced Roh Yun-ha as the winner; Lee Young-ji turned to her team and hugged them.

Lee Young-ji opened the rap in the following 1:1 battle; her team also lost this round. Which meant they had to win the team round by a lot to make up for these two losses.

Team Slay's team round started with Jambino and Lee Young-ji ad-libbing; Lee Young-ji pretended to be a grandma that needed anchovies, to which Jambino answered there were the anchovies in front of him, referring to their opponents. Most of Team Slay's team rap was performed by the two contestants that had not been in the 1:1 rounds.

Team Grillz's diss started with one of the rappers asking who the other three rappers next to Lee Young-ji were; one rapper answered that the other three were taking a ride on Lee Young-ji's bus. Hearing this, Young-ji pretended to be riding a bus, and her teammates went along with it, following behind her. Most of the rap itself was about the other members of Team Slay; however, in between the verses, the hook was an annoyingly catchy beat, in which they referred to Lee Young-ji's "bus". The last contestant on Team Grillz made a lyrical mistake and was not able to finish his rap; however, when the hook kicked in, the team started to sing and dance as if nothing had happened, which caused everyone to laugh.

In the end, Team Slay managed to turn things around and win by twenty points.

During Team R. Jus and Team Quiolin's preparations, Damini was kind of a background figure; although she was shown during the Team Quiolin preparations, nothing focused on her since she wasn't one of the contestants in the 1:1 fight.

Both teams tied in the 1:1 rounds; for the team round, Team Quiolin went first. One of the members of Team R. Jus quickly mimicked Damini before the round started; Damini turned and asked him if it was the voice impression of a famous singer, to which he jokingly thanked her as if she had said it was good.

Damini was the last on Team Quiolin to perform, and during her rap, Team R. Jus, the producer, and even the audience seemed to be having a hard time understanding what she was saying. Her rap seemed to end with everyone confused and no applause or cheers from the special guests.

Team R. Jus started with rapper Huh!, who immediately dissed Damini for copying Simon Dominic's name and compared her to "Doggy Poo", an old South Korean short animated movie. Huh! also mocked her voice, saying it sounded like a dog barking.

Both teams stood on stage awaiting the final voting results. Team Quiolin lost, meaning they would have to eliminate one of their members. The producers were divided between three contestants, but in the end, they chose to eliminate Damini. In a confessional, producer The Quiett explained that Damini did not have good diction; producer Leellamarz added that diction was very important in this round. On stage, producer The Quiett said that Damini was a member they enjoyed and who had developed a lot throughout the show.

Damini said that the producer and the other members worked really hard, and she promised to keep developing her rap outside of SMTM. Damini hugged her team as she exited the stage. In a voice-over, Damini shared that being on SMTM11 helped her evolve, and as someone who had a lot to say, she finally got to express herself. She was glad that she got to participate in this season.

Outside the studio, Damini said that although she was leaving SMTM11, it was just the beginning for her. Damini's exit meant that Lee Young-ji was the only female rapper left.

Still, in episode seven, round seven was announced as the first live performance. The winning teams from the last round faced each other, as did the losing teams; this was to keep a balance of numbers. The winning teams, with four members each, had three performances: two members they immediately picked and two that fought to get to perform. The losing teams only had three members, so they had two performances: one member that the producers picked, and two that fought for the microphone. As always, this round had two audience voting rounds.

Lee Young-ji was given the performance without having to go against one of her teammates for it. She was the second-to-last to perform in round seven, which meant she only showed up again one hour and twenty-one minutes into episode eight.

In a meeting room, producer Slom shared the beat he had made for Lee Young-ji with the team. Lee Young-ji said that she felt dreamy while listening to it. Producer Jay Park jokingly stopped the song and said that Slom had made a mistake and that the beat was his. Jay Park said

he was joking but that he loved the beat and wished it was his. Lee Young-ji explained that she wanted to create a stage that would remain in people's hearts.

A few days later, Lee Young-ji and producer Slom were shown alone at a cafe, where Slom commented that Lee Young-ji had worked hard. Lee Young-ji said that her lyrics were not going well, so Slom asked her why she was so worried. Lee Young-ji explained that she felt like she didn't have a single round in SMTM11 where she was good; the program gave her the drive to push forward, but it was also destroying her self-confidence. Lee Young-ji had talked to the other members and started to question whether she was taking their "*place*" by being on the show; as she said this, tears started to fall down her face. In the end, Lee Young-ji explained that she wanted nothing more than to share her point of view.

The show passed through some recordings of Lee Young-ji's training, then showed messages between her and one of the show's writers, in which she shared that she had vocal cord nodules. Lee Young-ji was shown visiting the hospital. At the stage rehearsal, she seemed quite uneasy about her voice; she was joined on stage by her featured artist pH-1, an SMTM777 contestant and HSR4 mentor; Lee Young-ji gave her best to sing and rap. Her producers and Team R. Jus commented that the rehearsal had been great, especially considering the state of her health.

Lee Young-ji's song was called "Not Sorry". The song had an R&B summer vibe, which perfectly fit with the featured artist, pH-1. Lee Young-ji performed without any visible mistakes, and her voice seemed to be almost perfectly healed. The performance ended with the crowd chanting Lee Young-ji's name.

The producers all spoke very highly of her performance, with producer Jay Park saying that she was "*the almighty entertainer*".

The first voting round was not announced. Instead, they were left for the end of the episode. Near the end, Lee Young-ji and Don Malik's first voting round was shown, with Lee Young-ji having won by a small margin. However, in the second voting round, Don Malik turned the vote around and won by a very small margin.

This loss meant that Team Slay had to eliminate one of their three members. In a voiceover, Lee Young-ji said that she believed she had done well this round. The eliminated contestant was Toigo, which meant Lee Young-ji moved on to the semi-finals.

In episode eight, round eight was confirmed as the semi-finals, which worked the same way as the previous season. The show's MC pulled out a card with a contestant's name, and they could pick anyone from another team. When NSW Yoon's name was pulled out when there were only

three contestants left to choose from, he chose Lee Young-ji. She stepped forward and asked how old he was, since he looked like he should be in school; NSW Yoon, on the other side, said that he wanted to go up against the best rapper, so he picked her.

One hour and eighteen minutes into episode eight, Lee Young-ji was announced as the last rapper to perform.

Team Slay was shown in a studio, where producer Slom explained that they needed something more aggressive to make it to the semi-finals; Lee Young-ji agreed. Producer Slom showed her the beat he had made for her; Lee Young-ji said in a confessional that the song was very "*danceable*", and that since it was the semi-finals, they needed something intimidating, so it was a relief that she had been given a beat to match that.

Lee Young-ji met up with her teammates, the two eliminated and the one still on the show, where she asked them for advice. Lee Young-ji asked them how she could give the best performance without dwelling on the results; Toigo answered that all that mattered was that she was self-assured so that even if she lost, she would be proud of the performance she put up.

During the stage rehearsals, the show presented her two featured artists: Jay Park, her producer, and So!YoON!, a female South Korean singer.

The song was called "Witch". The performance was accompanied by a group of seven female dancers. The song explored Lee Young-ji's powerful tone. Meanwhile, the performance itself featured a lot of dancing, especially the final hook, in which Lee Young-ji had a solo dance break.

The audience loudly cheered Lee Young-ji's name. In the dressing rooms, the other producers and contestants clapped, with the exception of Team Quiolin. Producer The Quiett did say, however, that Lee Young-ji had done a lot of thinking since she lost against Don Malik, in the previous round.

Even though Team Quiolin were the opponents this round, producer The Quiett shared in a confessional that he could see the desperation in the performance and that Lee Young-ji was "*a soldier in the battlefield*". Producer Lee Hwi-min of Team Grillz commented that everything looked to have been perfected.

Before the first round of voting was announced, the show's MC asked the two contestants how they felt about their odds. NSW Yoon compared his story with "David and Goliath", with Lee Young-ji being Goliath. Lee Young-ji said that she could say everything she wanted, so she put it in a song, and that this time she would win against "David".

The results were shown just to the contestants. As they walked backstage, Lee Young-ji put her hand on NSW Yoon's shoulder and said that she had done her best since he was her opponent. NSW Yoon said that their battle was amazing before the two parted ways.

Lee Young-ji was the first to announce that she had won when she stepped into her team's dressing room. She asked her team how the performance looked; they said it was amazing; she then gave them a high five. NSW Yoon then announced to his team that he'd lost. Producer The Quiett simply gave it a thumbs up.

The second voting round for Lee Young-ji and NSW Yoon was the last shown in the episode. Lee Young-ji's lead in the first round was quite big, but as the second round of voting appeared, she had nearly doubled NSW Yoon's votes. This meant Lee Young-ji would be the one to move on to the final. This also meant the full elimination of Team Quiolin.

Episode ten, the finals, started with a quick recap of the season. It then introduced the four finalists, who began rapping their most famous song of the season. Lee Young-ji did "Not Sorry".

Like last season, the group was shown in a pre-recorded scene, choosing the order of their performances. This time, the order wasn't picked by a single person but was instead chosen amicably. Lee Young-ji wanted second place, and even though Don Malik said he didn't mind being the first, they played a game of rock, paper, scissors. Lee Young-ji lost, which meant she had to go first.

Team Slay met up in the MORE VISION building, which is producer Jay Park's company. Lee Young-ji was the last member of Team Slay. Producer Jay Park started the conversation by saying that Lee Young-ji was already familiar with being at the finals, but this would be the first time for both producers. Producer Slom explained that since she had to perform two songs, he made two beats in which she could show two different sides of herself. Producer Slom played the first beat, which was mellow and calm. Lee Young-ji commented in a confessional that the song felt warm and dreamy; she said that to fit the beat she would write soothing lyrics that comfort people.

The scene changed to someone in a bear costume standing on the sidewalk, offering free hugs to people walking by. In a confessional, Lee Young-ji explained she was the one in the bear costume offering hugs; she did this because she believed hugging was the best way to convey feelings and comfort others. For some time, Lee Young-ji stood in the street without anyone approaching her; however, slowly, people came to hug her. As she was dancing and moving around, Lee Young-ji found it hard to breathe with the mask on, so she took it out, surprising the

people around; more and more people came to hug her and wish her good luck in the finals. Lee Young-ji thanked them for their support and told them to help comfort those around them with a hug.

Before the performance started, Lee Young-ji's mother was shown to be in the audience.

The first song was called "Hug". The lyrics reflected her negative state of mind, even though she had money. The first featured guest for this song was R&B singer and rapper Zion.T, a producer on SMTM5, SMTM9, and SMTM10. The second featured guest was Wonstein, a semi-finalist on SMTM9. Near the end of the performance, Lee Young-ji stepped down from the stage to give a few people in the audience a hug.

At the end of the first performances, the four contestants all stepped on stage for the first voting announcement. Producer Jay Park said that he was sure Lee Young-ji would be in first place. Lee Young-ji did indeed get first place, which seemed to slightly shock her; she commented that she had a much bigger weapon for round two. When asked by the show's MC, Lee Young-ji admitted she actually expected to not be first place in the first round.

Team Slay's second-round preparations were shown to be at a wine bar. Producer Jay Park once again reiterated that this would be Lee Young-ji's second time in a final. Lee Young-ji said that this time in SMTM11 did give her some *déjà vu* because there were a lot of "*overlapping moments*".

It was then shown that the second performance's theme would be *déjà vu*. Producer Jay Park asked her about her time in HSR3 and asked if they could call the already eliminated producer The Quiett since he was her mentor in HSR3. Lee Young-ji called The Quiett, who actually answered the call and discussed with her what he thought would be best for the second performance. The Quiett shared that a song about *déjà vu* should have a connection to HSR3, almost like an overwhelming feeling. Producer Jay Park joked that The Quiett should want Don Malik to win since they were from the same company, but The Quiett explained that he didn't care because, at that point, he was on the side of whichever team won.

Lee Young-ji's second song was called "Dejavu". Much like discussed in the pre-recorded scene, the stage and clothing matched the final of HSR3. Lee Young-ji's only featured artist for this song was her producer, Jay Park. The song was calming, much like the performance itself, which did not have anyone else on stage or any dancing.

The show had a special performance from a group of eliminated contestants, none of whom were women.

Before announcing any of the ranks, the show's MC asked the contestants to each make a winning promise. Lee Young-ji promised to "*live my life amazingly*".

The fourth and third places were announced, neither of which was Lee Young-ji, which meant she was in the top two, against contestant Huh!. After some stalling from the show's MC, the winner was announced as Lee Young-ji.

The show's MC asked Lee Young-ji to give a final comment; Lee Young-ji said that her second song was "Dejavu", which means "*to see something again*" and that song had given her first place, much like how she had won HSR3. She was very thankful to everyone and felt like she had honed her abilities in SMTM11. Lee Young-ji explained that she was still lacking a lot, so this was just the start for her.

Producer Slom gave Team Slay's final words by saying that Lee Young-ji had received a lot of love through the show; he found it hard to see her hurt, but thanked Lee Young-ji for her hard work.

Lee Young-ji said some words toward her family. Lee Young-ji admitted that when she was still living in a half-basement apartment, her uncle didn't like her music, so this was a way to prove herself.

The show ended with Lee Young-ji starting the show's final line with a "*Show Me the...*" and everyone joining in "*Money!*".

3.2 Unpretty Rapstar

Unpretty Rapstar, is the female lead spin-off of *Show Me the Money*. It had three seasons, two in 2015 and the last one in 2016.

Since the series is completely focused on women, this paper will explain the contestants and follow their story, dramas, and music on the series. Even if not detailed to the second, every important information for the understanding of the series will be written down.

Although referenced as the women's version of *Show Me the Money*, *Unpretty Rapstar* was different in almost every way possible. Unlike *Show Me The Money*, this series contestants were already somewhat known female artists, if the artist had not released music yet, then that

meant they had a contract signed with MNET, the company which hosts these rap competitions. The first season had eight contestants, the second had fourteen and the third had sixteen.

Instead of “rounds”, *Unpretty Rapstar* had “missions”. The missions ranged from group challenges to 1v1 diss battles, the reward for winning each mission was to record a track on the season’s compilation album. The semi-final was the only mission in which all the songs were released in the compilation album. The third season of *Unpretty Rapstar* also had an additional mission, the “First Show” for which the tracks were all rereleased in the compilation album.

The show also did not have producers or mentors. The rounds were instead judged by guests or an audience.

3.2.1 The first season

Unpretty Rapstar’s first season premiered in January 2015 on Mnet and was hosted by South Korean rapper San E. The show began by describing itself as a competition between eight female contestants and a “*war between female rap stars*”. All contestants on this show were already somewhat established in the K-HH industry.

The contestants walked into a room one by one, presented themselves, and sat down on the available chairs. They entered in the following order:

- Cheetah – The first female contestant in SMTM.
- Lil Cham – Who had already released her own album and was signed to a Hip Hop label.
- Jimin – The leader and main rapper of AOA, a popular K-Pop girl group.
- Kisum – Who had participated in SMTM3.
- Jolly V – Another SMTM3 contestant.
- Jessi – An American-born rapper. She debuted in South Korea in a mixed group called “Uptown” and after that, she debuted solo in 2005. Jessi left South Korea in 2009 after her second album and returned to the music scene in 2014 in a duo called “Lucky J”.
- Tymee – The third contestant from SMTM3.
- Yuk Ji-dam – The fourth contestant from SMTM3.

As each one of them walked in, they not only introduced themselves but also commented on each other; most of the comments were negative, but a few were positive. Jimin and Yuk Ji-dam seemed to be the nicest out of everyone; Jimin had an image to keep since she was in a K-Pop group, while Yuk Ji-dam was just young and naive.

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The show's MC entered, revealing that he was San E, a well-known rapper and producer on SMTM3. He started some drama by saying that Jimin was the "Pretty Rapstar" and that she did not need to be on the show; the other contestants did not like this because it was as if he was talking down to them.

The show's MC told the contestants that before the show started, they would do an introductory cipher. San E started the cipher, which then moved through each contestant. The drama between Tymee and Jolly V, introduced in SMTM3, seemed to continue in this series, as they showed their dislike for each other's cipher. Jimin failed to do her rap, which made Lil Cham give her an indirect diss, saying that she did not write her own lyrics. Jessi was the last to perform; unlike the others, she stood up and rapped, leaning and pointing towards the other women. At the end of her performance, all the female contestants shared in their confessionals that she was the best among them.

The show's MC questioned Jessi about why she had gone so close to Jolly V while cursing; Jessi explained that Jolly V knew English, which is why she had done it, and that it was not intentional.

In a confessional, Jimin seemed to get upset at the performance that she put on. She started to cry, explaining that she liked Hip Hop; otherwise, she wouldn't have joined that show.

San E announced the first mission would be to create a one-hundred-second rap cipher video; the video had to be done in one take. The song had to be written and arranged by the rappers themselves. In the end, the contestants would vote for the best and worst, with the winner receiving an undisclosed advantage in the next mission while the loser would be excluded from the following mission.

The contestants were divided into three groups. The first group shown were the ones in charge of the middle part: Tymee, Lil Cham, and Jimin. Tymee was confident with this mission, claiming she had experience shooting music videos. Lil Cham was surprised as Jimin began to give a lot of ideas on how to shoot the video. So far, Jimin had been quiet; however, when it came to giving advice and opinions for shooting the video, she was extremely helpful; after all, she was the leader of a K-Pop girl group, and it wasn't her first time doing a video in one take.

The following group was in charge of the ending: Jessi, Yuk Ji-dam, and Jolly V. Jessi found that walking down the stairs was too hard. Yuk Ji-dam tried to nicely ask the ones with the middle part if they could move closer to the stairs; however, the other group had already set their parts and did not walk to help.

The show cut to a room full of clothes for the contestants to change into. Here, the group for the first part was revealed to be Cheetah and Kisum. Cheetah picked Kisum's clothes, dressing her up nicely; Kisum really enjoyed it, calling her "Cheetah mom".

Meanwhile, Yuk Ji-dam was ridiculed for her fashion sense, and unlike Cheetah, her team got a fashion coordinator to help.

During the recording of the video, the first group kept having to restart; in the second group, Jimin was the highlight with her confident rap and camera work; in the third group, Jessi ended up falling down the stairs; it was not immediately shown whether she had hurt herself.

Sometime after the video recording, the contestants gathered to watch it. The show's MC asked Jessi if that night had been a "악몽", a nightmare. Jessi answered that it was because it was very cold. When asked what her favorite part of the mission was, Jimin answered that she liked how they became stronger; this friendly comment got the other contestants to laugh.

While watching the video, the contestants' first comments came during Jimin's part; every comment towards her was positive, especially focusing on how professional she looked. Lil Cham, on the other side, was laughed at. It then cut to Lil Cham restarting her scene multiple times, making it so that in the final video, it was clear Lil Cham was uncomfortable. On Yuk Ji-dam, the other contestants commented that she did not have much of a presence and seemed intimidated by Jessi.

The show's MC walked back in once the video ended; he started by asking the contestants who they considered to be the best in the video, and all of them said it was Cheetah. When San E asked who was the worst one, Jessi said, "*It was me or this person here*", while pointing to Lil Cham, who shrugged at the mention. In a confessional, Jessi said that Lil Cham only cared about her looks. The show's MC asked if everyone had given their best during the mission, to which Jessi answered that since her team wasn't working together, they all gave up, accepting their loss.

The contestants were then called to cast their actual votes for the best and worst rappers in the video. The show's MC counted the votes, with the best rapper tying between Cheetah and Jimin; the last vote to untie it would be his. However, that was left for the following episode.

The ending of episode one focused instead on the worst rapper in the video. Vote by vote, everyone picked the same person, Jessi. This meant Jessi would not participate in the second mission. As Jessi walked backstage, she said she was disappointed in herself and would return in "*survival mode*".

Episode two started with the announcement of the best rapper from the first mission. The show's MC shared that he voted for Jimin, meaning she had won the first mission. San E explained that he voted for her because she seemed more experienced; Cheetah kept a somewhat straight face while hearing this.

In the second mission, the contestants would fight to earn a spot in a new song by K-HH artist Zico. The mission was divided into two parts. In the first part, the contestants were divided into groups of two and had to perform Zico's song "Tough Cookie" on stage with him. Jimin's advantage in this mission was that she got to pick her teammates.

The show's MC explained that whichever team won, they would then have to go against each other in a solo round. Jimin picked Kisum and Lil Cham, admitting in a confessional that she picked them because they seemed easier to beat. This meant the other four contestants were on the second team. In a confessional, Cheetah said that Jimin's idea wasn't too great because to get to the solo round, Jimin's team had to win the first round.

Jimin's group decided to divide their rap into eight bars. As Jimin rapped, in the other group, Yuk Ji-dam commented on how unique her voice was, even trying to copy it. The contestants on Yuk Ji-dam's team agreed that Jimin's voice was unique, laughing as Yuk Ji-dam tried to copy her voice. Lil Cham found the song difficult to work with, something that the other two rappers on her team noticed. As for Cheetah, Yuk Ji-dam, Tymee, and Jolly V, only a bit of Yuk Ji-dam's rap was shown. The members were worried that Yuk Ji-dam would forget her lyrics, which she promised she wouldn't. Her promise made Tymee laugh, which Yuk Ji-dam understood as a snide remark.

Zico showed up during the rehearsal to hear what the contestants had prepared. He immediately noticed that Jessi wasn't there, and once they explained why, Zico said it was a shame since he wanted to hear her out; he also commented in a confessional that Jessi was an "*outstanding ace*".

Lil Cham had clearly not memorized her lyrics; she read them through her phone but still managed to trip up, not finishing her rap. Zico commented that, after hearing that, there was no advice he could even give. Meanwhile, the second team had no problems during their rehearsal in front of Zico.

During the actual performances, Zico was shown giving some opinions in a confessional. On Jimin, Zico praised her stage experience. He also commented that Lil Cham's movements during the performance were too awkward.

Before the second team's performance, Yuk Ji-dam was shown to not be with them. It was then explained that since she was too young, she wasn't allowed to enter the club they planned to shoot in. Yuk Ji-dam was upset, but nothing could be done except to remove her from the performance. However, if her team won the first performance, she could still participate in the solo battle. During their performance, Tymeef forgot her lyrics and could not fix her pacing to restart.

In the end, both teams went on stage, and Zico asked the crowd to clap for the team they thought was the best; the crowd, mainly men, cheered loudly for the first team.

The teams and Zico then met up in what seemed like the backstage area of the club, where Zico would comment on the teams. For the first team, he praised both Kisum and Jimin, ignoring Lil Cham; on the second team, he told Cheetah he was disappointed that he could barely hear her, then moved on to the topic of the second part.

For the second part of the mission, Zico announced that the winning team had to show him how they would rap over the beat that would be released after the mission; it was a heavy trap beat. Zico announced that the second team had lost, therefore they would not participate in the second part; however, Yuk Ji-dam would get to participate alongside the first team since he found it unfair that she had trained so hard.

Jessi joined back in to see the second part of the mission. Jessi sat down alongside the other contestants but got up again to discuss the last round. The other contestants did not seem pleased but didn't say anything; instead, in their confessionals, they explained that Jessi was quite scary. Jessi then did a rap, dissing a few of the competitors, and sat back down.

Kisum was the first to rap, San E and Zico seemed to really enjoy her rap, as did the other female rappers.

Kisum was the first to rap; San E and Zico seemed to enjoy her rap, as did the other female rappers. The second was Jimin; in a short clip, she explained she had barely memorized her lyrics and felt way more nervous than before; nonetheless, her performance had no faults. Kisum commented in a confessional that even though Jimin always said that she couldn't remember her lyrics, she always ended up performing without any problems. The third contestant was Lil Cham, who once again said she had a hard time memorizing the lyrics. Her performance seemed slow, and she kept looking to the side, probably trying not to get lost in her lyrics. The last contestant to perform was Yuk Ji-dam, who said that she had to perform better than the others so as not to disappoint her team. During her performance, Yuk Ji-dam's lyrics seemed to have predicted Jessi's outburst, as she said "*I 'Jessi' (show) you the problem with this scene.*". At the end of the

performance, the show's MC and Zico pointed out the lyrics. With everyone finding them funny, Jessi even said that Yuk Ji-dam must have had a "*sixth sense*". Cheetah praised Yuk Ji-dam's rap and how much she had improved.

When asked who they preferred out of the four, the eliminated contestants all answered Yuk Ji-dam. However, before announcing the best rapper, the show's MC asked everyone to choose who was the worst; everyone agreed it was Lil Cham. The show's MC finally permitted Zico to announce the winner of the first track for *Unpretty Rapstar*'s compilation album, Yuk Ji-dam.

Yuk Ji-dam explained that when she was on *Show Me the Money*, she felt judged every time she stepped on stage. She had worked hard, so she was thankful.

Episode three began with the contestants and the show's MC meeting for some food. Lil Cham was shown eating for some extensive time. The women discussed men that they liked, and then San E announced that he had "*invited some friends*". Two singers from two different K-Pop groups appeared, and at the end of their introduction, a video began playing in the room. Verbal Jint was announced as the producer of the second and third tracks of *Unpretty Rapstar*, and the two vocalists were announced as the songs' featured artists.

The track beats and their themes were then explained; the first's theme was "Farewell" and the second was "Ideal type". The contestants got to pick which beat they wanted to participate in; the ones that picked the same beat became a team and would participate in a team performance, like in the previous mission.

As the contestants picked which song they wanted, problems began to arise. The "Farewell" team had both Tymee and Jolly V, who seemed to deeply dislike each other; stuck with them was Jimin, who didn't know what to do. Meanwhile, the "Ideal type" team had five people who were unhappy to have such a full team.

The rappers finally got to meet the producer, Verbal Jint, in person. The show's MC called the first team onto stage for their performance. The "Farewell" team decided to do their performance sitting on chairs; this decision ended up backfiring, as the show's MC and the featured singer did not understand why they had chosen to do so. The show's MC found their song insufficient and asked if they had prepared anything else; Jimin and Jolly V showed a second verse, while Tymee watched since she had nothing else prepared.

The second team started with Jessi; one of the featured singers commented in a confessional that Jessi changed the mood of every song she was in with her powerful voice. The other featured singer praised Yuk Ji-dam, saying that she made lyrics that fit the song well. Lil Cham seemed to

have made a small mistake in her lyrics, which caused one of the featured singers to smile. During the hook, the women approached the men while singing along to the background vocals.

In the end, the show's MC and the song's producer praised Yuk Ji-dam for her lyrics. As for Lil Cham, the song producer said that it looked as if she didn't remember her lyrics. The song's producer said Cheetah's rap was impressive and powerful. The show's MC and one of the singers asked Jessi if she could rap in Korean, so she did another verse, impressing everyone.

The group of men took some time to decide while the contestants went backstage. Tymeec seemed upset that the other two had memorized extra lyrics, calling them "*sly foxes*" backstage.

The second part of this mission would only have two contestants from each team going against each other. For the "Farewell" beat, Jimin was picked first, but the second person picked wasn't shown. Instead, the show changed to the second team, in which Cheetah and Jessi were chosen. Jessi looked surprised to have been picked over Yuk Ji-dam. After picking the two, the song's producer told Yuk Ji-dam that her lyrics were great once again. Yuk Ji-dam said that she had been criticized a lot in SMTM for her lyrics, so she worked really hard to find her own style. After saying this, she began to cry.

The second part was revealed as a performance at a theater specifically for lovers. The two contestants would perform the song together, with one taking the first verse and the other the second. In the end, the audience would vote; however, the song's producer, the show's MC, and the two male singers had the final say; whichever contestant won would be the rapper in the released song.

Jessi was the first one to perform, and in a confessional, Kisum commented that Jessi looked really professional. Cheetah rapped the second verse; Jessi and a few other contestants shared in a confessional that Cheetah was cool and knew how to dominate the crowd.

The men found it difficult to pick one of the two since they were both really strong. The two contestants were happy with the performance they put up, with Jessi adding that "*the most important thing is that we had fun*". Cheetah was announced as the winner, which seemed to make Jessi really happy. In a confessional, Jessi shared that Cheetah deserved the win since she matched the song so well. However, the song's producer, Verbal Jint, added Jessi, explaining that the song worked really well with the two of them on it. This made the two contestants very happy, with Cheetah even hugging Jessi. Once again, in a confessional, Jessi seemed ecstatic that both had the chance to participate in the song; she explained that even though she had the mentality that it was a competition, when she trained and performed with Cheetah, they truly felt like a group.

The "Farewell" beat's performance was only shown at the start of the fourth episode. Jimin rapped the first verse, and Tymee the second. Tymee's appearance was explained by the song's producer, who said in a confessional that he preferred Tymee's lyrics. In a confessional, Tymee questioned Jimin's rap skills. The two contestants tied the audience vote, shocking the show's MC. Nevertheless, the song's producer picked Jimin, as he found that her performance was overall better than Tymee's.

After the second mission, the contestants gathered on a different stage, this time with an extra female rapper, Jace from Miss \$. The show's MC announced that Jace would enter the competition, which didn't seem to be well received by the other contestants based on their facial expressions. Jace did a small acapella rap to introduce herself.

The show's MC announced that the worst rapper in the following mission would be eliminated from *Unpretty Rapstar*, and even Jace could be eliminated.

The fourth mission was revealed to be a 1v1 diss battle; most of the female rappers were happy to hear this. The show's MC chose one female rapper to stand beside him, and another contestant would stand if they wanted to compete against them. If more than one person stood up, the contestant chosen by San E could choose which one to face. Tymee chose to go against Jace. Lil Cham had two people pick her, Jessi and Yuk Ji-dam; she chose Jessi because Jessi had already dissed her, so she wanted to diss her back. Jolly V had four people stand up for her; she picked Kisum because, for her, Kisum was the easiest. This meant the last three would be in a 1v1v1 match since there was an odd number of contestants.

The show's MC announced that the diss battle eliminations would be decided by him and a special duo, MC Meta and DO, producers in SMTM2.

The performances started with Jolly V and Kisum. Jolly V's rap was strong and well-liked among the other contestants. Kisum forgot her lyrics almost immediately, and aside from a few random words, she did not get back into the rhythm. The two guests said that it was obvious who had won and who had lost, giving Jolly V the win.

The second performance was Tymee against Jace. Jace's rap felt outdated, keeping most people in the room straight-faced. Tymee's rap was more aggressive, surprising the guest judges. Tymee got the win.

The third performance was Lil Cham against Jessi. As they were getting on stage, Jessi could be heard in a voice-over saying that because she was up against Lil Cham, she didn't even work hard; all she wanted was to hear what Lil Cham had to say. Jessi was the first to rap; her

lyrics really dissed Lil Cham. The other contestants commented that it was impossible to beat Jessi's stage presence. Lil Cham's rap was confusing; she attempted to rap in English, but her lack of knowledge of the language ended up preventing her from finishing her rap. Jessi won the performance.

The final performance had the last three contestants: Yuk Ji-dam, Cheetah, and Jimin. Yuk Ji-dam opened the performance with a solid rap. Cheetah's rap was strong and got the other contestants to cheer for her. Jimin's rap surprised the special guests, who thought she would be more timid. The special guests praised the three; nonetheless, they could only have one winner, so they removed Yuk Ji-dam and asked Jimin and Cheetah for a second rap in acappella. Cheetah won after the acapella rap.

The four rappers who won the battle were called back on the main stage. The show's MC explained that for the next mission, the winners had the ability to pick which guest's team they preferred to be on; however, whichever team they picked was the one they would have to go up against later on. Kisum and Cheetah picked MC Meta's team, while Jessi and Tymee picked DO. The guests then got to choose whom they wanted from the contestants who lost; DO picked Yuk Ji-dam and Kisum, while MC Meta picked Jimin. MC Meta was only missing one more contestant, and he had to pick between Jace and Lil Cham; whichever wasn't picked would be eliminated from *Unpretty Rapstar*. The two were given a second chance to appeal with an acapella rap; this time Lil Cham seemed to give it her all, clearly more focused than the previous missions. MC Meta chose Jace, meaning that Lil Cham was eliminated from the show.

Lil Cham gave a final speech in which she promised to use the show as a starting platform, calling it the "*most fortunate moment of my life*". Before Lil Cham left, Jimin thanked Lil Cham for supporting her, leaving both with tears in their eyes.

The fifth mission would once again be for the chance to participate in two songs for the compilation album of the series. The mission was divided into two rounds; the first round was announced as a performance in front of five hundred people that same night. In this round, one rapper would be chosen by the producer and the other by the audience; the two would then move on to the second round.

The two teams were given a beat to rap to. The song for MC Meta's team was "*Rank Zero*", from his duo, Garion; the song for DO's team was "*King with no crown*". Each team was also given a featured artist: MC Meta's team had Nuck, from the Korean Hip Hop trio Soul Dive; DO's team had the show's MC, San E, which caught everyone by surprise. Finally, the two teams were given the same theme "*Superstar*".

During MC Meta's team meeting, a problem appeared: three contestants wanted the first verse, especially Jimin, who said she would not give it to someone else. The featured artist, Nuck, resolved this by deciding their verses himself. DO's team also ran into problems deciding the order; however, they didn't have San E in the meeting to assist with the discussion.

The four MC Meta members showed their raps, and they praised each other except for Jace, who thought the rap didn't match the beat. On DO's team, Jessi gave some tips on how to rap to Yuk Ji-dam; finally, San E appeared and asked the contestants to show him what they had prepared so far. Jessi said she had not memorized her lyrics yet, which worried San E since they had to perform in a few hours. The group rehearsed, and the one who forgot their lyrics was San E. After that, both teams seemed to have fun training.

MC Meta's team was the first to perform. Jimin's rap had a lot of cheering from the audience, but as Jace picked up after her, everyone looked quiet; MC Meta commented in a confessional that Jace just didn't blend in with the performance. Cheetah was received positively by the audience, and lastly, Jolly V wasn't talked about or had any audience reactions shown.

DO's team performance started with only Kisum and Jessi on stage; the two wanted to be the first to rap; however, it seemed like Jessi had been the one to come out on top, starting the performance; both performed well. Tymee and Yuk Ji-dam appeared after the hook; Yuk Ji-dam asked if the crowd knew her name, referencing when no one knew her name in SMTM3, but this time everyone shouted Yuk Ji-dam back at her. The two also performed well. San E ended the song.

After the performances, the teams gathered elsewhere to hear the two contestants who had passed to the second part of the mission: MC Meta picked Cheetah for his track, and DO picked Jessi for his track. As for the audience, the voted-in members who would pass to the second round were Jimin from MC Meta's team and Kisum from DO's team.

The second part of the mission was a 1v1 match. Much like the previous 1v1 match, they could diss each other; however, they didn't have to do so, and there was no set theme.

Before the eliminated contestants could leave, MC Meta called them back and asked Tymee and Jolly V why they hadn't gone against each other. For him, *Unpretty Rapstar* was the perfect stage to end the discussion between the two. Jolly V agreed, saying in a confessional that the problem was that Tymee kept avoiding her. Tymee explained in front of everyone that she wanted to keep ignoring Jolly V. This confused San E, who asked why she kept ignoring the problem instead of solving it; Tymee explained that she didn't want to be associated with Jolly V

or even to stand next to her. Jolly V asked Tymelee why she had joined the show since she knew Jolly V would be there; Tymelee ignored the question.

Once backstage, Jolly V tried to explain to the camera crew that she didn't like to be around Tymelee either. This upset Tymelee, who began to speak loudly, nearly to the point of screaming, interrupting the on-stage conversation between the winning members and the show's MC.

The contestants were then shown on a different day. They sat down, and soon enough, the show's MC, MC Meta, and DO arrived. Tymelee asked for the microphone before the second part began. She finally dissed Jolly V, with the rap being mostly hurtful insults focusing on Jolly V's looks. Jolly V dissed her back, referencing her previous songs. She also added that she was not an idol; she was a rapper, and therefore beauty wasn't too important.

Finally, the 1v1 raps began with Jessi against Kisum. Jessi was supposed to start but missed the beat and could not recover, so she requested a restart, which was granted. In the restart, Kisum immediately mocked Jessi, surprising the other contestants; Kisum's lyrics made fun of Jessi's lack of Korean knowledge and her not-so-great ten-year career. In a confessional, Jessi admitted that she had thought of Kisum as someone below her, but now she saw that was a mistake. Kisum was chosen for DO's track.

The second performance, Cheetah against Jimin, was only shown at the start of episode six. Cheetah started with a strong rap, perhaps hoping that Jimin would falter; however, Jimin came back at her with an equally strong rap, mentioning her already successful career compared to Cheetah's not-so-great one. Cheetah's second verse began with a copy of Jimin's voice and lyrics, surprising everyone. Until the end of the performance, the two never backed down. Both rappers were praised by the group of men; nonetheless, Jimin came out on top, winning the performance.

Twelve minutes into episode six, the show's MC announced there was only one more song in the compilation album for the show. However, before the last mission, the contestants were divided into teams of two; whichever team came last would not only lose but also be eliminated from the show itself. The teams were as follows: Jimin and Kisum; Cheetah and Jolly V; Jessi and Yuk Ji-dam; and lastly, Jace and Tymelee. The show's MC announced that this mission would have a panel of fifteen special judges; however, he did not reveal who they were. The special guests were later shown to be all well-known South Korean male rappers, most of whom had participated in SMTM.

The show's MC announced that the first team to perform would be Cheetah and Jolly V. The duo was asked if they had a lot of time to prepare; Jolly V answered that they had only

received the beat the night before, and practice had to be postponed due to Jolly V's "*personal schedule*", which was shown to be her walking around a bar street and taking photos with random people. At 15 minutes to 11 p.m., Jolly V finally appeared at the studio.

Jolly V started the rap, and the special judges and the other contestants seemed bored, keeping mostly straight faces. Cheetah's rap brought some smiles to the special guests' faces. After the performance ended, the comments made by the guests were very negative towards Jolly V and warned that even though Cheetah was good, the fact that it was a team mission could hurt her in the end.

Yuk Ji-dam and Jessi were the second teams to perform. The two were shown working well with each other while preparing for the performance. In the performance itself, they showed great teamwork with a lot of preparation behind it. The special judges loved the duo, calling them "*true Hip Hop*".

The third team was Jace and Tymee. Jace wanted to show a different version of herself, so instead of doing what Tymee had proposed, which was for her to rap with a microphone stand, wearing a dress, she wanted to move around. Jace started the performance, and as she rapped, the other contestants tried not to laugh. In a confessional, one of the special guests said that her performance made the audience feel awkward. Tymee's rap was strong, surprising everyone, even the special judges. In their comments, the judges only praised Tymee.

The fourth and last team were Jimin and Kisum. During their training, the two seemed really close to each other. The two performed without flaws, but their teamwork looked a bit flawed, something pointed out by Jessi. Near the end of the performance, the two interacted with the special judges, making them say their names. In their separate confessionals, the special judges praised the performance, saying it had brought them some happiness.

The team rankings were announced from best to worst. In first place were Jessi and Yuk Ji-dam, and in second place were Jimin and Kisum. The third and fourth teams only had a seven-vote difference. The show's MC announced Tymee and Jace as the eliminated team.

Tymee began to cry; she said her elimination was a shame but that she was happy to have joined and that the show had given her a reason to reflect on herself. Upset, Jessi said that Tymee's elimination made no sense; all the special guests had done was praise her, but in the end, they eliminated her. The show's MC asked Jessi who should have been eliminated; Jessi turned and pointed to Jimin and Kisum's team, saying they should have been eliminated.

Jessi continued to be upset as she openly talked with Cheetah about the elimination. Everyone said their goodbyes to Tymee and Jace. Jimin and Kisum left immediately after.

Episode seven started with an explanation of the semi-finals. The remaining six contestants would face each other with their own performances, much like in SMTM; the crowd would then vote for their favorite, who would move on to the finals.

The show's MC explained that the contestants had to each vote for who they thought was best to the worst; the best rappers would then be given the chance to pick their opponents. The voting was then announced, and Cheetah got first place, which meant she had the chance to pick her opponent; Cheetah picked Jimin. The second to pick was Jessi, who chose Jolly V. This meant Yuk Ji-dam and Kisum, the last contestants left, would face each other. For the semi-finals, the song theme was "*Real Me*".

The show's MC announced the last song had a mystery producer, and after showing a bit of the beat, he explained that the song's theme was "*no matter who, no one will know my tears*".

In a pre-recorded interview, Cheetah explained that she was run over by a bus when she was seventeen; after the incident, she had to be put into a coma; the chances of survival were low; and the chances she would have other negative effects if she woke up were high. However, Cheetah pulled through and fully recovered from the incident.

Cheetah's performance was nothing more than her standing on stage and rapping behind a microphone stand. The song's lyrics were rather sombre, but they also reflected the luck she had. Cheetah's family watched from the crowd. After the performance, the other contestants gave some comments, mainly praising Cheetah's courage.

Before Jimin's performance, she met with a fellow AOA member, Im Chan-mi, who said that she found it really sad that Jimin was put aside for being an idol, unlike the others who were "*underground*" rappers. Jimin's performance was announced to have SMTM3 runner-up Iron as a featured artist, whom she was happy to have on her side.

Jimin's performance was very "Hip Hop", with a lot of sexual references and cursing. In the dressing room, Jessi was shocked they could put such a performance in front of the audience. On the side of the stage, Cheetah watched with a slight frown on her face.

The crowd was given a few moments to vote after the two performed. The voting results were about to appear on the screen when the show cut to the second match.

The second match was Jessi against Jolly V. Jolly V would be the first to go on stage. During rehearsals, Jolly V explained that she wanted a song that would help people going through the same difficulties as her and, in the end, a song that would also strengthen her. Jolly V's performance began in front of a mirror, where she would share her life story. In the waiting room, the other contestants seemed to be enjoying the performance, with Kisum even saying it gave her goosebumps.

Jessi's preparations began in the building of AOMG, a Korean Hip Hop company, where she met with the owner, Jay Park, and song producer, Gray. Producer Gray shared that Jessi had sent him a file recording of her singing, and he immediately had a good feeling about it. Jessi shared that her mother would see her on stage for the first time. Although this made her happy, the mistakes she had made in the past and the worries she had given her still made her feel sorry. Jessi's performance didn't have any featured artists. The lyrics reflected her love for music and why she had chosen to continue pursuing it, no matter how much she failed. In the waiting room, Yuk Ji-dam happily praised the performance. In the end, Jessi's mother was shown wiping her tears.

The audience voted for the two performances, after which the results were almost immediately announced. Out of the two hundred votes, Jessi received one hundred and fifty-four, meaning she had made it to the final.

Episode eight, the final episode, began with the final semi-final match, Kisum against Yuk Ji-dam.

Episode eight, the final episode, began with the final semi-final match between Kisum and Yuk Ji-dam. To prepare for her performance, Yuk Ji-dam met up with SMTM3 producer The Quiett. Yuk Ji-dam shared how, after her appearance on SMTM3, she became the target of negative comments, which affected not only her but also her parents. During the last rehearsal check, Dok2, another SMTM3 producer, appeared alongside The Quiett to hear Yuk Ji-dam; the two gave her positive comments on her rap. Another figure entered the room: Baek Ye-rin, a South Korean singer from a duo called 15&. Yuk Ji-dam picked Baek Ye-rin to feature in her performance because she felt more comfortable since the two were the same age.

Most of the performance had Yuk Ji-dam standing alone on stage. Yuk Ji-dam's lyrics reflected on the bullying she had received all her life and how she had grown from it. Jessi said in a confessional that she was really proud of Yuk Ji-dam.

The audience voted, and immediately after the results were revealed, Yuk Ji-dam won by just seven points.

Kisum's preparations began in a car, as Kisum was visiting someone, whom she explained was very special. Kisum walked into a clothes shop and called for her mom. Kisum's mom said she had missed her, and they gave her a kiss. Kisum said that her mom was the person she loved the most and that she would work hard for her. Kisum's performance was like a poem dedicated to her mom. The featured artist was the well-known South Korean singer Insooni. The camera cut backstage, where Cheetah was shown crying. At the end of the performance, Kisum dedicated the song to all mothers.

Finally, the show announced the results of the match between Cheetah and Jimin. Cheetah won with one hundred and forty-nine votes out of two hundred.

The show's final mission was a collaboration between the three finalists. The voting was done during and after the performance was over, and whichever rapper had the most votes was crowned the winner of *Unpretty Rapstar*. During the training for the final round, a special guest appeared: Ailee, a popular South Korean singer, who announced she was the collaborator for the final track of the compilation album.

On stage, the show's MC announced the producer of the last track as MC Mong, known for being one of the most commercially successful Korean Hip Hop artists; unfortunately, San E added that MC Mong could not be present on the show. The last performance was also revealed to use the same beat as the final track. Each one of the rappers had their own verse, with Ailee also participating on stage. The three finalists each showed their unique styles on the track while also managing to keep it cohesive. The crowd cheered, and so did the eliminated contestants from backstage.

As Ailee left the stage, the camera crew questioned her about whom she wanted to win; although she was hesitant to say, Ailee admitted she was rooting for Jessi since the two were friends.

The first round of votes was announced, with Cheetah winning; however, there was still a second round, and Jessi was closely behind in points. The audience left, leaving only the previously eliminated contestants and the three finalists on stage. The show's MC called the third-place contestant first, Yuk Ji-dam, who'd only gotten seventy-nine points. Cheetah and Jessi stood on stage, awaiting their votes with closed eyes. The numbers appeared on the screen behind them, and the eliminated contestants announced that Cheetah had won with one hundred and seventy-six points; Jessi only had one hundred and thirty.

The contestants surrounded Cheetah and lifted her. Cheetah thanked everyone and said she was really happy that her mother got to see her perform. Meanwhile, Jessi was shown walking around the group, trying to cover her face. The show's MC asked Jessi how she felt, and when Jessi turned to look at Cheetah, she began to cry, quickly explaining that they were tears of joy. Jessi shared that she had been in the industry for ten years and only felt like she had shined at that moment.

The show ended with the contestants screaming "Unpretty Rapstar!" and a few final words in their separate confessionals.

3.2.2 Unpretty Rapstar 2

The second season of Unpretty Rapstar aired in September of 2015, not even a year after the first season. The show's host was still San E. Much like the first season, the female rappers in this season were already somewhat well-known.

The contestants walked into a room one by one, presenting themselves and sitting down on the available chairs. They entered in the following order:

- Heize - Presented as a "second" Jessi, She had released a six-song EP titled *Heize* before her appearance on the show.
- Yezi - The main rapper of the K-Pop girl group Fiester.
- KittyB - Was an underground rapper for ten years. Officially debuted in 2012.
- Ash B - Known for her straightforward lyrics. Debuted independently in 2014.
- Yubin - Main rapper of popular K-Pop girl group Wonder Girls, the "*OG's of girl groups*".
- Ahn Soo-min - Who had participated in SMTM4.
- Kasper - Another SMTM4 contestant.
- Hyolyn - Well-known South Korean singer.
- Gilme - The only female rapper in the Hip Hop trio Clover.
- Truedy - Compared to the most popular female South Korean rapper, Yoon Mi-rae.
- Moon Sua - A trainee at YG Entertainment, one of the biggest entertainment agencies in South Korea.

After the eleven members introduced themselves, San E walked into the room and started asking them a few questions. San E's questions focused on the drama outside the show between Kasper and Ash B. Much like the previous season, this one started with an introductory cipher.

The show's MC revealed that the contestants would be moving to a different location for the first mission. In the new location, the first track's producer was revealed to be DO, who had also appeared in the previous season. The first mission worked the same way as the first season: it was a one-take video, and whichever contestant was voted as the worst could not participate in the following mission.

This time the contestants were not divided into groups; instead, they all took some time together to decide what they wanted to do. Soon they found a problem with the verses: one of the verses had eight bars, while the others had four, which meant one of the contestants would get double the time the others had. Each rapper tried their own eight-bar verse, and Truedy came out as the winner.

When they planned the recording of the video, Yubin took control due to her experience. Meanwhile, Hyolyn gave tips to the contestants on how they should stand. Things started to get confusing when the contestants moved around the set and gave each other the wrong information. In the end, Yezi became confused about what to do for her part, which in turn confused the other contestants.

Before the video recording started, Gilme admitted that she was very tired but did not want to rest because, as the oldest contestant, she felt like she had to set an example. The recording started well, with the first two contestants performing flawlessly; however, when it came time for Gilme to perform, she kept making mistakes. The other contestants looked upset with the restarts and commented that Gilme looked visibly unwell. Gilme blamed it on her mental state. Meanwhile, the youngest contestant, Moon Sua, kept being energetic and supporting the other contestants; this made Gilme state that while she found her cute, she was also envious.

Later, Hyolyn was also seen making several mistakes, which eventually led to her giving up and choosing to lip sync. This "special treatment" made the other contestants upset. Hyolyn shared in a confessional that she felt neglected because the other contestants only saw her as a vocalist and not a rapper.

The contestants met again after the video had finished editing; the show's MC asked them if the recording was difficult, which Gilme confirmed. Moon Sua, on the other hand, said that she had fun. The age difference between Gilme and Moon Sua was confirmed to be sixteen years.

The show's MC asked Truedy if being the last to film was difficult. Truedy explained that the hardest part was waiting for her turn; she felt very lonely. However, she also said that Moon Sua had approached her to talk to her throughout the shoot, which helped. A few clips of Moon Sua and Truedy getting along were shown.

The video was finally shared, and the contestants commented positively on Heize's opening. Unfortunately for Hyolyn, her lip-syncing was extremely obvious, and the other contestants shared their dislike for her performance in their own confessionals. Hyolyn herself shared in a confessional that she hated how it had turned out. Gilme commented on her own performance in the video, saying that she probably didn't look as cool as the other rappers. Moon Sua and Yubin were both liked by the other contestants.

After the video played, the show's MC asked Truedy, the last to perform, if she thought she could have done better; Truedy replied that she really liked how it had turned out and wouldn't change a thing. The other rappers also shared their positive opinions on her performance.

San E asked Ash B who she thought had made the most mistakes; she answered that it had probably been Hyolyn. However, she and the other contestants also commented that they understood why she ended up lip-syncing since her voice had started to get strained.

The contestants voted for the best and worst rappers in the mission. Afterward, the show's MC shared their votes. Truedy barely won the mission, with Heize coming in second with only one vote difference; Moon Sua voted for Heize.

During the announcement of the votes for the worst rapper, most contestants voted for Hyolyn, so she explained that the reason why she had chosen to lip sync was so that she didn't take even more time from everyone else; this explanation upset Yubin, who had voted for Gilme, since she thought Hyolyn lip-synced to protect her voice. Nonetheless, Hyolyn got last place, which meant she would not participate in the second mission.

Truedy's advantage for the second mission was that she could exclude another rapper; the rapper being excluded was only revealed at the start of episode two. Truedy picked Moon Sua, shocking everyone. It was finally revealed that Moon Sua had voted Truedy the worst rapper. The show's MC asked Moon Sua if she regretted voting against Truedy, which she said she didn't. Moon Sua's comment started more drama between the two contestants.

The show's second and third tracks producer was revealed as SMTM4 producer Verbal Jint. Since this mission had two tracks, there were two battles for them. The first track was about self-love, and the second was about love for music. The show's MC explained that the mission would be performed in front of two thousand people.

After the contestants were given some time to prepare, they gathered again for the second mission. Verbal Jint appeared to reveal that the two tracks would each feature a female rapper;

the first track featured Jessi and the second Cheetah. The show's MC explained the voting system for the mission: the contestants would be divided into two groups depending on which track they preferred. After each performance, the songs' producer, featured artists, and the show's MC would pick their favorite rapper, while the audience would also pick their favorite rapper; the two chosen rappers would then face each other.

To decide which track they wanted, the show's MC randomly picked the rappers' names. Each track had a maximum of five contestants; if one of the tracks filled up, the remaining uncalled contestants would immediately have to join the other track.

There appeared to be some drama between KittyB and Jessi outside the show. KittyB had commented that Jessi shouldn't participate in rap competitions if she doesn't make Korean raps, and this upset Jessi. The discussion continued in the series, as Jessi commented that KittyB also swore in English in her songs. Jessi did not want KittyB on the track she would be featuring; however, that's exactly the track KittyB picked. Seeing that KittyB had picked her track, Jessi commented in a confessional that she didn't want to collaborate with her and would rather swap KittyB with someone else.

The contestants would end up being KittyB, Yubin, Kasper, Heize, and Yezi for the second track performance, and for the third track, it was Gilme, Truedy, Ash B, and Ahn Soo-min.

In the meeting for the second track, much like in the first mission, while planning the order for the performance, Yezi was confused, which ended up confusing the other contestants. KittyB calmly explained the order again, and finally, Yezi understood.

Meanwhile, the meeting for the third track seemed to be going fine, with one exception: Gilme wanted to sing. After hearing the third team's preparations, Cheetah shared that there was no need to sing, after all, it was a rap competition.

Back to the second track group, Jessi appeared to see how they had decided on the order and the hook. After hearing the team's hook, Jessi cursed at the camera crew and shared that it was horrible; KittyB took responsibility for it, making Jessi once again comment on how much she disliked her. Jessi heard the rest of the raps and commented positively on Yubin and Heize; the only negative comment she gave was to Kasper, in which she said that her voice was too soft.

In the two tracks separate meeting rooms, Cheetah and Jessi shared that they would eliminate a contestant after the main rehearsal. Most of Jessi's comments remained during the main rehearsal; however, this time she added that while she didn't like KittyB, she wasn't a bad rapper, and also commented that Yezi looked like she was trying too hard. Jessi chose to eliminate Yezi

over Kasper, explaining that in the main rehearsal, Kasper tried her best to impress her and that she saw the potential to improve her. Yezi was disappointed but accepted her elimination.

During the second track's main performance, Yubin seemed to have a lot of fans, something the other rappers noticed, calling it something like a fan club meeting. In a confessional, Verbal Jint commented that Kasper was still lacking, and even though he was up close, it sounded like he was hearing her from far away.

After the performance ended, it was time to show the third track's main rehearsal. Jessi was surprised by Truedy's rap, comparing her to Yoon Mi-rae. Cheetah also thoroughly enjoyed Truedy's rap and confidence. Cheetah didn't like Gilme's or Ash B's rap; she didn't comment on Ahn Soo-min. Cheetah eliminated Ash B.

As they performed, in a confessional, Verbal Jint commented that Gilme had really done her best to show her rapping skills on the beat. During Ahn Soo-min's rap, Cheetah commented in a confessional that she had improved a lot. Everyone enjoyed Truedy's rap.

The groups met once again after the performances in another studio. The fans' choice for the second track was announced first, with Yubin being picked. Verbal Jint shared that he too had picked Yubin as his first choice; however, his second choice was Heize. Jessi and Cheetah disagreed with his choice, preferring Kittib, but nonetheless, Heize would move on to the second part of the mission. For the third track, Truedy won the audience vote; once again, she was also Verbal Jint's first pick, so he called Gilme as the second choice. Cheetah commented that out of the three contestants in the performance, she had seen the most growth from Ahn Soo-min and said she expected a lot from her in the future. Cheetah's kind words caused Ahn Soo-min to start crying; in a confessional, Ahn Soo-min explained that usually no one gave her any recognition, so just hearing that Cheetah had paid attention to her made her tear up.

At a later date, the contestants, featured artists, track producer, and the show's MC met once again for the 1v1 battle. The two third-track contestants would go first. Truedy started the battle with a rap that was well-received by everyone. Gilme's rap almost immediately came to a stop after she made a lyrical mistake. Jessi tried to get her to continue her rap, but Gilme was already offbeat. Gilme requested to rap over the actual third track beat and was allowed by Verbal Jint; unfortunately, in this second attempt, Gilme would make a mistake again, after which she sat back down on her chair. Truedy won the third track.

The 1v1 battle for the second track was only shown at the start of the third episode. Yubin went first, and although she started out fine, she made a very clear mistake; however, unlike Gilme, Yubin picked back up almost immediately, rapping until the song was over. Heize's rap

was strong and had no mistakes. When the time came for Verbal Jint to pick, Jessi shared that she didn't think Yubin was a better rapper, but she fit the song better. After considering it, Verbal Jint picked Heize as the second-track rapper. In a confessional, Yubin shared that she was upset; she started to cry and explained that she liked the beat and did her best, but there was nothing more she could do.

The show's MC announced to the contestants that the third mission was not a track mission but instead an elimination mission in which two contestants would be eliminated from the show. San E also announced that the third mission would air online for the first time in the show's history and would be voted on by viewers watching around the world. The mission was 1v1 matches; the show's MC would pick a contestant's name at random, and they would get to pick whom they wanted as their opponent.

The duos were picked in the following order: Hyolin picked Kasper; Ash B picked Gilme; KittiB picked Heize; Truedy picked Ahn Soo-min; and the remaining three rappers, Yubin, Yezi, and Moon Sua, would face each other in a 1v1v1 match.

Sometime after the contestants had prepared their raps, they gathered once more. The show's MC announced that the mission had two special guests: Zico, who'd been a producer in SMTM4, released earlier that year, and Mad Clown, a well-known South Korean rapper.

All comments made during the 1v1 rounds were done in separate confessionals.

The first round pitted Hyolyn against Kasper. During Kasper's rap, Mad Clown commented in a confessional that she was good but seemed too tense. As for Hyolyn, Zico said that he liked her rap. After the performance, fellow contestant Heize also praised Hyolyn. At the end of the performance, the votes were announced, with Hyolyn winning by a confident amount.

The second round was Ash B against Gilme. During Ash B's rap, special guest Zico commented that he could even hear her; there were too many things happening at once. Gilme's performance received a positively shocked expression from most people in the room; Hyolyn even said that Gilme looked like she was releasing all the pent-up anger she had. Gilme received nearly double the votes of Ash B.

The third round pitted Heize against KittiB. Halfway through her rap, KittiB forgot a line but continued as if nothing had happened. Mad Clown commented on this by saying that forgetting a line wasn't much of a problem and that the rest was good. Zico shared that Heize was special, as her singing voice and her rap were two very distinct things. Heize lost to KittiB, and even though her points were quite high, the fact that she lost meant that she was up for elimination.

The fourth round pitted Ahn Soo-min against Truedy. Zico shared that he already knew Ahn Soo-min from SMTM4 and thought that the fact she was so gender-neutral was welcoming for everyone. Truedy's rap started strong, with Mad Clown commenting that she was just ahead of everyone else. Truedy won the round with the most votes out of every winner so far.

The fifth and last round was the three-way rap with Yezi, Yubin, and Moon Sua. The three rappers all received positive comments on their individual raps. Yubin got nearly double the points of every other contestant up to that point. Moon Sua got second place, which meant Yezi was up for elimination with the fewest points out of everyone.

The five contestants up for elimination stepped back on stage. The show's MC announced that each of the special guests could save one of them; Zico saved Kasper, and Mad Clown saved Heize. The last three were given a second chance through a solo performance. Ash B's performance seemed to confuse the other contestants; Yubin shared in a confessional that Ash B had not expressed herself well. Ahn Soo-min was up next, and her performance looked to have been well received. Yezi was the last one, and as the beat started, producer Zico shared in a confessional that when the beat came on, Yezi completely changed her attitude; Yezi's rap was strong this time, in contrast to the two moderate raps before her. The other contestants also commented that Yezi looked cooler. Ash B and Ahn Soo-min were eliminated. The show's MC explained that Yezi had passed because her rap was the most honest they had seen so far.

Episode four started with the contestants enjoying a meal together. A new contestant appeared, Jeon Ji-yoon, professionally known as Jiyoona, a member of the popular K-Pop girl group 4minute. Jiyoona did a freestyle introduction rap, which was mocked by the other contestants for sounding too much like K-Pop.

The show's MC announced the fourth mission would once again contain two tracks, both of which had the theme of "*Love*". The contestant got to listen to the two tracks; however, they were not told who was the producer.

At a later date, after preparing their rap, the contestants were called to a concert hall. The show's MC called the two tracks producers Cha Cha Malone and Jay Park, both from a K-HH label called AOMG. The track decision worked similarly to the first season's two-track mission. The contestants were randomly called to pick a room for either track four or track five, and those that picked the same room were up against each other in the mission.

At the end of the track allocation, the fourth track had Truedy, Moon Sua, Gilme, Yubin, Yezi, and Kasper. The fifth track had KittiB, Heize, Hyolyn, and Jiyoona.

The show's MC explained that both teams would be divided into two groups, which would perform in front of two hundred people, and at the end, one would be eliminated from the mission. The fourth track was divided by Truedy since most of the contestants wanted to team up with her. Truedy chose to group with Kasper and Yubin. This meant Moon Sua, Yezi, and Gilme were automatically grouped. Moon Sua was unhappy that Truedy had not picked her.

Truedy led her team's training, while Moon Sua and Yezi seemed a bit conflicted about what to do in their performance. During the rehearsal, Jay Park commented positively on Truedy. During the second team's rehearsal, Truedy commented that they were very plain, so her team would do better.

Truedy's team was the first to step on stage for the performance. In a confessional, Jay Park commented that Yubin had clearly improved throughout the competition. As Truedy stepped to the front of the stage, the audience started to cheer loudly. During her rap, Truedy made a mistake; she cursed loudly and turned around, trying to compose herself. This reaction received a lot of negative comments from the other contestants. After leaving the stage, Truedy was upset with her mistake and started to cry as she got to the dressing room.

The second team's performance was well received by everyone; each contestant brought to the song their different styles. Even though they had some complications deciding things during their training, that was not perceptible on stage.

The show returned to the fifth track team. The group division was not as easy, as the contestants didn't want to work together. After some discussion, Hyolyn and Heize grouped up, leaving KittiB with Jiyoona.

The teamwork between Heize and Hyolyn was strong, and the two easily figured out how they wanted to perform. Meanwhile, KittiB and Jiyoona seemed to be training separately. During the rehearsal, Jay Park told Jiyoona that she still needed a lot of practice. However, Hyolyn and Heize's rehearsal wasn't as smooth as they hoped; Heize looked to be struggling with her lyrics and eventually had to request to see them again.

KittiB and Jiyoona performed first; their performance was fine until close to the end, when KittiB tripped on her lyrics, something she had been doing in the previous missions; however, this time it was very obvious.

Hyolyn and Heize were up next. During Hyolyn's rap, Jay Park commented in a confessional that she was extremely charismatic and had a great stage presence. Heize looked more confident and didn't make any mistakes this time around.

The winning team for the fourth track was Moon Sua, Gilme, and Yezi. Truedy was extremely upset that her team lost, and she took complete responsibility for their elimination. Backstage, in tears, she apologized to her teammates, and the cameras kept recording her as she left the building, still crying. The winning team for the fifth track was Hyolyn and Heize.

The second part of the mission was announced as a special stage with Jay Park in front of a crowd. The first team to perform was the fourth track; the show kept cutting between Yezi and Moon Sua, making it somewhat clear the winner was between the two and not Gilme. The performance had no mistakes. At the end of the performance, the show cut to immediately announce that the winner of the fourth track was Yezi. Hyolyn and Heize performed after; Hyolyn's fame made Heize share in a confessional that she probably didn't even have a chance at winning the mission. The performance had no mistakes from either of them. Cha Cha Malone announced that the winner of the fifth track was Hyolyn.

Before the episode ended, the show's MC announced that the fifth mission would start as a 1v1 diss battle and once again be an elimination mission. Only two duos were announced before the episode ended: Truedy with Gilme and Hyolyn with Yubin.

At the start of episode five, Moon Sua chose to go up against Yezi, explaining that it wasn't because she thought she would win easily but because she had something to say. Yezi then said that she would carefully listen to her. Heize picked KittiB, even though KittiB did not seem to want to go up against her. Finally, Kasper picked Jiyeon, ending the grouping phase.

After preparing their raps, the contestants gathered for the performance. The show's MC announced the mission's special guests were the producers of the sixth and seventh tracks, Dok2 and The Quiett, owners of the South Korean independent rap label Illionaire Records. San E also announced that the winner of the 1v1 had the privilege of picking which track they wanted to compete on for the second part of the mission.

The order of the battles was decided by a coin toss. The songs were divided into two intertwined verses for each rapper. The first on stage were Yezi and Moon Sua. On Moon Sua's second verse, she was overwhelmed and could not continue; this gave a clear lead to Yezi, who was declared the winner of this battle.

The second stage was Heize against KittiB; KittiB used a beat from Heize's ex-boyfriend for her first verse, and on top of that, the lyrics were personal and aggressive, surprising the other contestants. Compared to KittiB, Heize's stage energy seemed low. KittiB won this battle.

The third stage pitted Kasper against Jiyoona; both performances were well received; however, Kasper was chosen as the winner.

The fourth stage was Truedy against Gilme; the show tried to position this stage as a battle between old and new rap. The stage ended up getting really personal, with Truedy nearly in tears due to Gilme's comments that she was nothing but Yoon Mirae's copy; Truedy did an extra verse after they had ended, rapping without the microphone. The special guests gave the win to Truedy.

The fifth and last stage was Hyolyn against Yubin, which the show referred to as "*The Big Match*". Both made it through their raps without any mistakes; the lyrics on both sides were very personal, and it seemed to be affecting them negatively. The guests found it hard to pick between them but ultimately chose Hyolyn.

Since everyone had now performed, the show's MC presented the contestants with the beats from each guest. The third track, which was Dok2's, had its main theme as "*Bad Woman*", whereas the seventh track's theme was not disclosed, nonetheless some of the contestants liked it because it was The Quiett's beat. The following part of the mission was a group song mission in front of a small audience. The previous stage winner got to pick which beat they wanted for the second part of the mission. Hyolyn, Kasper, Truedy, and Yezi picked Dok2's beat; this meant only KittiB picked The Quiett's.

The special guests then got to pick from the remaining contestants. Dok2 was given an advantage because he was chosen by four of the five winners in the previous stage; this meant that his team would have five members instead of four. Dok2 picked Moon Sua. The Quiett's team could only fill in three more spots, so he picked Heize, Yubin, and Jiyoona. Since none had picked Gilme, this meant she had been eliminated not just from the mission but from the rest of the show.

At the start of the sixth episode, it was clear both team preparations were tense, with the members not quite getting along; however, they did manage to train their performance. Dok2's team performance was up first. Truedy, Kasper, and Moon Sua had no problems; Yezi's high heel came off as she rapped, which luckily did not seem to deter her from rapping; however, Hyolyn did make a noticeable mistake. After the performance ended, Dok2 picked the two rappers who would have a 1v1 to decide the winner of the track. He chose Truedy, but the second contestant was not announced.

The show then cut to the performance of The Quiett's team. None of the team's four contestants made any mistakes; the only difference between them seemed to be that Yubin was better received by the audience. The Quiett picked Yubin and KittiB for the final 1v1 for the seventh track's mission.

The first to step on the stage for the 1v1 match were Yubin and KittiB. The other contestant found this part of the mission to be a disadvantage for Yubin, who was generally regarded as having weak disses, but to everyone's surprise, Yubin stood her ground and rapped without making any mistakes. The Quiett picked Yubin as the seventh track's winner.

KittiB was clearly upset that she'd lost, commenting in a confessional that once again she nearly got what she wanted but it wasn't good enough.

Finally, the second contestant for the sixth track 1v1, was shown as Yezi. Yezi started the performance by lightly pushing Truedy while she rapped; this was shown multiple times as other contestants commented over it, negatively surprised she had touched Truedy. Truedy won the sixth track.

Halfway through the sixth episode, two new contestants were introduced. Kim was from a female Hip Hop trio called Rubber Soul, and Exy was a trainee at Starship Entertainment, the same company as Hyolyn. Exy was not well received due to her presentation as a trainee. After the self-introductory rap, the other contestant did comment more positively on Exy.

The eighth track's producer was announced as YDG, a well-known rapper and producer in SMTM3. The sixth mission would start as a crossover mission; the now eleven contestants from *Unpretty Rapstar* would have to face seven male rappers from *Show Me the Money* and four from *Super Rookie Challenge*. Out of these twenty-two contestants, the bottom three would be eliminated from the show; however, if none of the women were at the bottom, they would all stay on the show.

Before the mission started, each of the male rappers introduced themselves with a rap; after, the female rappers did the same. While the female rappers were only shown commenting positively on male rappers, the reactions the other way around were mixed, with only Truedy, Heize, Yubin, and Yezi receiving positive comments.

Much like the previous missions, the performances were held on a small stage in front of an audience. The performance order was decided by each contestant putting their hand inside a box with balls numbered from one to twenty-two.

Heize got first place; she wasn't happy but said she hoped to prove that women could be "heroines" too. YDG and an SMTM contestant did not find her performance impressive, but they did not say it was bad.

A few performances were skipped through: first with male contestants who were praised, then with female contestants who were called "unimpressive". Hyolyn, Truedy, Yubin, and Kittib received positive comments and loud cheers from the crowd. The crowd and other contestants did not comment on Kim's performance. Exy seemed to have captivated the crowd; they were shown voting and cheering after she ended. Microdot, a male contestant from *Show Me the Money*, and Yezi were both compared due to the strong nature of their rapping styles.

Episode seven started with the ranking announcement, starting with the first place, which was Microdot. Second place went to another male contestant; however, Yezi did receive third place. The ranking continued until there were only three women left on stage and only six numbers left to announce. Moon Sua and Kittib barely passed, landing in the eighteenth and nineteenth, respectively.

Kim was placed last, meaning she was eliminated from *Unpretty Rapstar*. Kim thanked everyone for their effort and said that even though she was there just for a day, it was a good experience.

The second part of the mission was a team challenge; the contestants were divided into three teams, of which only one would make it to the third and final part. Yezi, having gotten first place in the first part, was given the choice to pick her teammates; she chose Yubin, Hyolyn, and KittyB. Yezi explained that she understood that if they won, they would face each other in the final part, but that didn't bother her. Truedy got to pick after; she chose Heize and Moon Sua. This left Jiyeon, Exy, and Kasper as the last team.

In the second part, the teams used beats from previous YDG songs and performed them on stage with him; the audience would then vote for their favorite team. The chosen rappers of the groups were then told to perform an acapella rap, and YDG would then give them song-picking priority. Truedy and Hyolyn performed without any flaws. The last group played rock, paper, scissors to decide which one would perform; Kasper won. Kasper stepped up to rap and used "*dirty lyrics*" in her rap, which YDG commented that he loved.

YDG gave Kasper the win. Kasper's team chose to do "Shake It", every other team's favorite song. Yezi's team picked "Run". And lastly, Truedy's team picked "*Bandolier*".

The first two teams, Yezi's and Truedy's, were shown having fun during their training session. Meanwhile, Kasper's team was the only one that looked tense. The members of Kasper's team explained that it was because, in the previous part, they had all scored low, so that affected their state of mind. YDG visited Kasper's team training room and gave them some words of support, which got the contestants to laugh. During their stage rehearsal, the other contestants commented that Kasper and Jiyeon were overpowered by the beat; however, Exy's performance was impressive.

In the main performance, the comments made previously about Kasper's team remained. Kasper herself commented in a confessional that Exy "*was no joke*".

The other two teams were then shown, with YDG only praising them through the training and stage rehearsal. This remained the same during their performance.

In the end, Kasper's team was last in the fan voting, and Yezi's team took the win.

The last part would be for each to write and perform their lyrics over the eight tracks produced by YDG. He would then choose which rapper he preferred out of the four remaining contestants.

Yezi performed first, and although she started off well, Yezi repeated the wrong lyrics and proceeded to curse and apologize before moving back to her seat. Hyolyn and Yubin performed well, making YDG question in a confessional whom he should pick. Lastly, there was KittiB, who was introduced as a rapper who always fell short just a little bit. However, it was clear KittiB gave it her all, and the other contestants cheered for her as she rapped and reached out to them.

YDG chose KittiB as the track's winner. However, he did admit in a confessional that he would have picked Yubin if it was just for himself; YDG explained he picked KittiB as her lyrics would resonate better with other listeners.

Episode eight started with the reveal that, out of the remaining ten contestants, three would not participate in the final mission. The following mission was the final elimination. For this mission, the contestants would divide themselves into five duos and perform on stage together. Whichever duo had the fewest points after the performances was eliminated from the show, and the fourth-to-last group would have a 1v1 battle to decide which contestant would be eliminated.

The contestants chose each other in the following order: Heize chose to join Truedy; Exy picked Kasper; Jiyeon picked Yubin, even though Yubin did not want to join her; Moon Sua picked Yezi; this left the last team as KittiB and Hyolyn.

After the contestants prepared their duo performances, the show's MC presented the panel of special judges who would be voting on them. All nine of the special judges were well-known South Korean male rappers.

Both Heize and Truedy's performance, as well as Hyolyn and KittiB's, were strong, and were only commented on positively.

The third team to step on stage was Yubin and Jiyoona. The show cut to previous footage, which showed Jiyoona's previous failures and the negative reactions from the other contestants. In a confessional, Yubin shared that even though she did not want to be paired with Jiyoona, she had no choice but to make sure they both made it through the mission.

In her lyrics, Yubin used a phrase that Jiyoona had been mocked for, but unlike Jiyoona, she incorporated it more into the song. The other contestants were shown commenting in their confessionals that Jiyoona had yet to show something good. The special judges liked Jiyoona's rap, with one of them saying in a confessional that he had become her fan right at that moment.

The fourth group was Kasper and Exy. As they stepped on stage, a few voice-overs played, in which the other contestants said they would be in last place. No preparations were shown. The two did not interact with each other during the stage, instead opting to rap in place. The special judges said that they were probably nervous, but the performance felt rushed.

The last team was Yezi and Moon Sua. Who had not seen eye-to-eye throughout the season. Yezi tried to give Moon Sua some rapping advice, but their preparations seemed rather tense. During the performance, Yezi made too many mistakes, and even though Moon Sua tried to cover for her and was praised by the special judges for her rap, it was not enough to compensate for what had happened.

The eliminated team was Kasper and Exy. Both were quickly shown crying backstage, and they then gave their last thanks to the show.

Coming in fourth place were Yezi and Moon Sua, who would now have to go against each other in a 1v1. However, before the show's MC could announce it, Yezi said she would not do it. Yezi explained that she had seen Moon Sua do her best in that performance, and did not deserve to be eliminated because of her. So Yezi refused to do the 1v1.

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Yezi was taken backstage by the show's producers, who explained that Moon Sua passing that way would not be beneficial for her, so Yezi had to at least try. After being persuaded, Yezi stepped back on stage and performed without any mistakes.

Moon Sua's song was very personal and written more in the form of a poem than a rap. The song made the other contestants cry, as they found it unfair that there was a chance Moon Sua would be eliminated.

The other contestants were made to vote for the performance they liked better. Sua won the vote. Before Yezi left, Moon Sua told her that she felt bad since they had teamed up a lot and she was usually the one lacking. Yezi left the show with footage somewhat portraying her friendship with Moon Sua more amicably.

Finally, the ninth and last track of the show's producer was announced as Brave Brothers, known for producing a lot of number-one hits in South Korea. Brave Brothers explained that the beat was inspired by a nineties rap style called G-Funk; the theme of the song was "*Pride*", and the contestants had to show that women could be as good or better than men.

The semi-final mission would be 1v1 eliminations. The show's MC picked a contestant's name from a box, and they got the chance to pick who they wanted to face.

The duos were picked in the following order: Truedy went up first, but her choice was blurred; Hyolyn picked Heize, confusing the other contestants and even Heize herself; KittiB picked Jiyeon; this meant that the last two were Moon Sua and Yubin.

Before the episode ended, it was revealed that the eliminated contestants had a revival round, and among them, the winner was either Exy or Yezi.

At the start of episode nine, Truedy revealed she picked the mystery card in hopes it would be Yezi since she saw her as a true rival. Luckily for her, the mystery contestant was indeed Yezi, who'd been revived for the semi-finals.

The first to perform were KittiB and Jiyeon. Backstage, the two chatted, with Jiyeon admitting she was tired of "*fighting*" with the other contestants; Jiyeon was upset at the way she had started the show but wanted to show that she had improved.

Jiyeon's performance featured a collaboration with BTOB's rapper Jung Il-hoon. The song's lyrics focused on Jiyeon's will to not let anyone else's opinion change her. Meanwhile, KittiB's performance was solo; in her lyrics, KittiB expressed her will to win.

After some stalling from the show's MC, the winner was revealed as KittiB, who had double the votes. The vote difference between the two surprised the contestants backstage; Jiyoona also commented that losing that way made her feel bad.

The second pair to perform were Hyolyn and Heize. While preparing for the performance, Heize met up with her brother, who brought her food and motivated her for the semi-final. Hyolyn, on the other hand, prepared alone; she talked about her idol's life and how hard her journey on the show had been.

Unlike the previous 1v1 match, both contestants had a featured artist: Heize had EXO's rapper Chanyeol, and Hyolyn had K-HH rapper Basick. Heize's song was powerful and playful, while Hyolyn's was sentimental. Hyolyn also took advantage of her singing skills by singing the chorus.

Hyolyn won by nine points. On the verge of tears, she explained that she wrote the song to help others, and she hoped it had done so.

Episode ten started with the third round: Yubin against Moon Sua. Moon Sua was upset because she felt that Yubin had a clear advantage over her. Both explained their struggles: Moon Sua had trained with a prestigious entertainment company, but in the show she underperformed almost every round; on the other side, Yubin had to promote her group, Wonder Girls, and continue in the competition, which was proving to be a challenge.

Moon Sua's featured artist was a fellow YG artist and member of the sibling duo AMKU, Lee Su-hyun. Moon Sua's lyrics mentioned the hate she had received and how, even after seeing all of it, she wanted to keep doing music. Yubin's performance had to be restarted soon after it began; this shocked the contestants backstage. Yubin's special guest was revealed as Jo Hyun-ah from the K-R&B trio Urban Zapaka. At the end of the performance, even though Yubin had made no more mistakes, she was clearly let down by her own performance.

Moon Sua won with double the votes of Yubin. Both contestants hugged, and Yubin apologized for her mistake.

The fourth and final round pitted Truedy against Yezi. The show presented a few clips of the disagreements the two had during the show.

Yezi's featured guest was K-HH rapper Hanhae. Yezi's performance was considered "*fierce and hot*" by the other contestants. Truedy's featured guest was Girls Generation singer

Tiffany. Truedy's performance and song were inspired by 1990s African American Hip Hop, with the artist herself admitting to it.

Before announcing the winner between Yezi and Truedy, the show cut back to before the semi-finals to reveal the featured artist for the final track, Gummy, a well-known South Korean singer. The eight remaining contestants were shown preparing for the final stage in case they had made it through the semi-finals.

Finally, the final stage began, and Truedy was revealed as the one to have passed the semi-finals. Each contestant had one verse in the song. After performing, Gummy left the stage and said that out of the four, she preferred Hyolyn.

The audience left, and then the final rankings were announced, starting with the fourth place, Moon Sua, and then the third, Hyolyn. Only Kittib and Truedy stood on stage, awaiting the final two results. After some stalling, Truedy was finally declared the winner, and the other contestants surrounded her, hugging and congratulating her.

The show ended with the contestants screaming "*Unpretty Rapstar!*" and a few final words in their separate confessionals.

3.2.3 Unpretty Rapstar 3

The third season of Unpretty Rapstar aired in July 2016. The show's host was changed to KHH rapper YDG. Much like the past two seasons, the female rappers in this season were already somewhat well-known.

The contestants walked into a room one by one, presenting themselves and sitting down on the available chairs. They entered in the following order:

- Kassy - South Korean singer. Was the first to enter but did not introduce herself.
- Giant Pink - A contestant on SMTM5, which aired a month prior to *Unpretty Rapstar 3*.
- Jeon So-yeon - A trainee under Cube Entertainment who had participated in the K-Pop survival show *Produce101*.
- Ha Joo-yeon - A contestant on SMTM5, and a former member of the K-Pop girl group Jewelry.
- Nada - Who had gained popularity after releasing her first mixtape "*Homework*", she was also a former member of the K-Pop girl group Wassup.
- Janey - A contestant on SMTM5, and a former member of the K-Pop girl group GP Basic.

- Miryo - Known for being one of the first-generation South Korean Hip Hop artists, a judge on SMTM1, and a member of the popular K-Pop girl group Brown Eyed Girls.
- Grazy Grace - Known for her outlandish style and videos.
- Euna Kim - A contestant on *Superstar K3*, and a former member of K-Pop girl group The Ark.
- Yuk Ji-dam - A contestant on SMTM3 and *Unpretty Rapstar 1*.
- Gilme - The only female rapper in the Hip Hop trio Clover.

After the eleven members introduced themselves, YDG walked into the room and presented himself as this season's MC. Much like the previous seasons, this one started with an introductory ciphер. A few of the rappers also chose to do a freestyle after the introductions.

The contestants were then taken by bus to the location of the first mission; much like the previous two seasons, this mission was a one-take music video.

At the new location, the producer of the first track of the show was revealed as Primary. The music video's producer was also presented as Lee Ki-Baek, a male K-Pop music video producer.

The contestants got to hear the beat they would use for the music video and started to plan the song together. Yuk Ji-dam disliked everyone's proposed hook, making it clear through her comments and facial expressions; her reactions upset everyone else in the room, especially after they heard how she was also unprepared to make a hook. The contestants chose Grace's hook even though Yuk Ji-dam disliked it.

The music and video producers entered the meeting room to announce that one of the contestants had to be picked for the bridge, which would have eight bars instead of the usual four. Each contestant would show what they had and then vote on each other to pick a winner. Jeon So-yeon was the only contestant to rap without looking at her lyrics. However, the votes seemed split between two other rappers, Miryo and Giant Pink, who did not seem to like each other. Not all votes were shown, but Giant Pink got the eight-bar bridge.

The contestants were quickly shown getting ready, and the filming began right after. Ha Joo-yeon made a lot of mistakes, which surprised the other contestants since they thought of her as someone with a lot of experience. Since Miryo understood how Ha Joo-yeon felt, she sat beside her and gave some encouraging words. A few other mistakes were made by different contestants. The shoot ended with the video producer warning of another mistake, this one seeming more serious; however, that mistake was not shown.

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At a later date, after the video had been prepared, the contestants gathered to see it. When asked by the show's MC who'd been the person to make the most mistakes, a few of the contestants agreed it had been Kassy.

While watching the video, most of the contestants received positive feedback, except Kassy and Euna Kim. Euna Kim's mistake was a surprise to everyone; her part in the video had been lip-synced due to a mistake in her lyrics. Euna Kim explained that when she made the mistake, she decided to let the shooting continue since everyone was tired.

Each contestant voted for the worst and best rapper in the mission. The worst rapper was announced as Kassy, who, as a punishment, did not receive a special ring for completing the first mission.

Episode two began with the announcement of Giant Pink's win in the first mission.

The contestants gathered at a later date for the second track mission. In *Unpretty Rapstar 1*, Yuk Ji-dam won the second track mission, so she was confident she could do it again. The first track's producer was announced as Gill, better known for being the singer of the South Korean Hip Hop duo Leessang; Gill was also a producer on SMTM5.

The first part of the mission would see the contestants divided into three teams. Gil explained that for the first part, they would have three beats from three different eras, one from the 1990s, one from the 2000s, and the third from the 2010s. The three beats were either produced by him or he collaborated on them.

Since Giant Pink had won the first mission, she was given the advantage of picking her teammates and song first. Giant Pink chose the most recent song "*Horangnabi*", which had been produced in SMTM5. Then for her teammates, Giant Pink chose Yuk Ji-dam and Nada.

Jeon So-yeon was the second to pick her team; she picked the oldest beat, surprising everyone since she was the youngest contestant. As her teammates, Jeon So-yeon picked Miryo and Ha Joo-yeon because the two of them had the most experience out of everyone else.

Lastly, Grace instantly got the 2000s song but still had the chance to pick her teammates. Grace picked Euna Kim and Kassy.

Only one contestant was left without a team, Janey. The show's MC revealed that Giant Pink had one more advantage: she had control over which team the last member would be placed on. Giant Pink took some time to think and then placed her on Grace's team.

A bit of the team training showed that Grace's team was the only one not talking to each other and mainly focusing on their own lyrics.

During Giant Pink's team rehearsal, it was clear that Nada was struggling more than the other two. Even the producer, Gill, commented in a confessional that he did not understand why she had been chosen.

In the main performance, the other contestants liked Yuk Ji-dam and Giant Pink's; however, a few of them commented that Nada did not seem like she was enjoying being on stage, and that harmed the overall performance. Despite the comments, producer Gill enjoyed the performance, claiming that he would even record their version of the song.

Jeon So-yeon's team training and rehearsal were shown in more detail. Here it was revealed that Ha Joo-yeon had broken down crying during the team's training. Ha Joo-yeon explained that the pressure was too much and she could not do it. Ha Joo-yeon also explained that seeing a much younger contestant, Joo Soo-yeon, perform better than her was hard. The main rehearsal also didn't go much better, with Ha Joo-yeon forgetting her lyrics.

On their performance, Jeon So-yeon and Miryo performed well, just like the other contestants had expected; however, to Jeon So-yeon's and everyone's surprise, Ha Joo-yeon also managed to perform without any problems.

As was shortly shown after the teams had been selected, Grace's team atmosphere was clearly not great. The contestants planned their training mostly together, with the exception of Janey, who kept quiet until the first song training. In the rehearsal, the other contestants were surprised by how well Grace's team performed; producer Gill also commented that they did well.

During their performance, the other contestants and Gill only commented positively. Near the song's ending, the camera lingered more around Janey, who was clearly emotional, as she tried to cover her face. In a confessional, Janey explained that she was emotional because it had been a long time since she had been on stage, and after hearing the audience call her name, she felt very thankful.

The show's MC announced that the audience had picked Giant Pink's team, which would then be in the second part of the mission; however, unlike the previous seasons, Gill could also pick one extra contestant from the other two teams. He praised Kassy and Jeon So-yeon but picked Miryo.

After preparing for the second part of the mission, the contestants gathered again. Gill, the song's producer, announced the featured artist as Mad Clown, who'd been a producer on SMTM5 alongside him.

Each contestant had to perform a different solo rapper over the second track's beat. Nada was the first called to perform. Nada kept making small mistakes, which the other contestants noticed. At the end of the performance, Gill also shared that he too had noticed her mistakes, and to him, it was clear she was nervous.

Miryo was called on stage. As she stepped on, Miryo asked if she could take off her underwear since it had gotten stuck. This caused a lot of awkwardness from everyone in the room, but the show's MC allowed her to do what she asked, so Miryo walked behind the stage. Once she had returned, Miryo rapped with confidence. After she had finished, Gill asked if she had planned her stage entrance; Miryo denied this but asked if that had affected her performance, to which Gill answered that it kind of did.

The third contestant to perform was Yuk Ji-dam. A few of the contestants and Gill shared how excited they were to see her perform. Yuk Ji-dam's performance got the other contestants to move along with her. In the end, a few of the contestants gave their opinions, most of them calling Yuk Ji-dam the most confident but also a bit narcissistic.

The last contestant was Giant Pink. A short rehearsal was shown, and in it, Giant Pink seemed to struggle to remember her lyrics. Nonetheless, Giant Pink performed with confidence and got the other contestant to move along to the beat. In different confessionals, the contestants shared how amazed they were at Giant Pink's perfect pronunciation.

The show's MC, Gill, and Mad Clown exited a backstage room to discuss whom to pick as the winner. Back on stage, Giant Pink shared that she did not think she had the best rap. The show's MC announced the winner of the second track as Yuk Ji-dam. Even though Giant Pink had not won, the camera kept pointing toward her while she kept a straight face.

The third episode began with the reveal that the third mission would have a permanent elimination. The mission started with duo stages; this part of the mission was streamed and voted on through an online system. The show's MC pulled a contestant's name at random, and they were given the chance to pick their opponent.

The first three duos were picked in the following order: Giant Pink chose Kassy; Miryo picked Nada; and Janey picked Euna Kim. Jeon So-yeon picked Ha Joo-yeon; however, Ha Joo-yeon vetoed the pick, so Jeon So-yeon decided to pick Yuk Ji-dam; but once again, Yuk Ji-dam

vetoed this, so Jeon So-yeon turned to Grace, who immediately used her veto. With everyone having used their one-time veto on Jeon So-yeon, leaving her without an opponent, she could now call whomever she wanted, and they could not refuse, so once again Jeon So-yeon called Ha Joo-yeon. This left Grace and Yuk Ji-dam against each other.

The first duo called on stage were Giant Pink and Kassy. During their training, Giant Pink was surprised that Kassy seemed to be more prepared for the performance. The performance itself went well for both contestants. Giant Pink won the online vote, meaning she was safe from elimination.

The second round pitted Miryo against Nada. In their training, Miryo shared that she was happy they had chemistry and quickly planned their performance; Nada, on the other hand, said she would have preferred to go against someone else. Much like their previous performances, both contestants made no mistakes. Miryo won the vote, which Nada said in a confessional was what she had expected.

The third performance was Janey and Euna Kim's team. Their training did not go well, as both contestants could not come to an agreement on what to rap about. During the performance, the observing contestants were shown commenting in confessionals; all agreed that Janey's voice was over-projecting, while Euna Kim seemed more confident. Euna Kim won the online vote.

The fourth performance was Ha Joo-yeon against Jeon So-yeon. Ha Joo-yeon looked nervous during the training; meanwhile, Jeon So-yeon was confident and quickly wrote down eight bars. Both rappers did well in the performance, surprising the other contestants, who thought Ha Joo-yeon would fold under the pressure. Grace and Giant Pink both shared their support for Ha Joo-yeon before the voting results were announced. Jeon So-yeon won the online voting by a large margin.

The last round was between Grace and Yuk Ji-dam. The show presented extra clips in which Yuk Ji-dam seemed extremely confident that she would not lose the duo's performance. Although full of confidence, Yuk Ji-dam made a lot of mistakes during their training. Nonetheless, both performed without any flaws. Yuk Ji-dam won the online vote.

From the five contestants who had lost, the two with the most votes would be saved from the bottom; then the contestant with the fewest votes could pick one of the remaining two contestants for the final elimination performance.

Ha Joo-yeon and Janey were saved from the bottom five. Janey's votes surprised everyone, even Janey herself, who began crying. The other contestants did not seem happy with her being

safe from elimination. Kassy was the least-voted contestant, so she had the advantage of picking her opponent. Kassy picked Grace as her opponent.

The two quickly prepared their pre-written rap and returned to the stage soon after. Grace performed first, and the contestants observing commented that she was very unique and therefore had a clear advantage over Kassy. After Kassy performed, no comments were made.

The contestants all voted to eliminate Kassy. As she left the studio, Kassy said she was regretful but understood she had to move forward.

Before the fourth mission, the show's MC announced that there had been an additional mission to add new contestants to the show. Kool Kid, a contestant on *K-Pop Star 4*, and Ash-B, a previous contestant on *Unpretty Rapstar 2*, walked in. Kool Kid was asked to do an introduction rap, which was then countered by a freestyle rap from Jeon So-yeon.

Finally, the fourth mission was explained as a 1v1 diss battle. The show's MC pulled Janey's name from a box, giving her the chance to pick her opponent. Almost every other contestant wanted her to pick them; however, Janey already had someone in mind, Yuk Ji-dam, who had been badmouthing her throughout the past missions.

At the start of episode four, the following contestants were picked in the following order: Ha Joo-yeon picked Euna Kim; Giant Pink picked Nada; Grace picked Ash-B; and Jeon So-yeon picked Kool Kid. Miryo was not paired with anyone.

After preparing, the contestants met up again at a later date. The show's MC announced that the producer of the third track was Kush, an SMTM5 producer.

The first two to perform would be Janey and Yuk Ji-dam. The show presented a small montage of the two preparing their rap. In it, Janey made a lot of mistakes; however, Yuk Ji-dam also seemed to have some difficulties with her rap. Yuk Ji-dam walked backstage and returned wearing a dressing gown, confusing everyone. Janey rapped about Yuk Ji-dam's previous appearances in rap competitions, while Yuk Ji-dam dissed Janey's age. After the song had finished, Yuk Ji-dam turned to Janey and rapped one more bar. The other contestants were shocked by the aggressiveness of the performance. Kush picked Janey as the winner. Yuk Jid-am did not understand why she lost; Kush explained that Janey's lyrics fit the diss battle better and that even though she had made a mistake in her lyrics, it was not noticeable, so he picked her.

The second to perform was Nada and Giant Pink. In the training footage, Nada was shown training everywhere she went, while Giant Pink went out and greeted her fans. Nada's diss was

positively received by the other contestants. Giant Pink, on the other hand, did not remember her lyrics. The win went to Nada.

The third performance was Grace against Ash-B. While making the disses, both contestants were shown researching each other. Their performances did not have any mistakes, which at the end prompted the third track producer, Kush, to comment that it was a "*close match*". Kush picked Ash-B, explaining that she had the best lyric delivery of the day.

The fourth performance was Jeon So-yeon against Kool Kid. For this diss battle, neither contestants' training was shown. Before the performance started, Jeon So-yeon left the stage and returned with her *Produce 101* suit. Kool Kid started her diss by mentioning Jeon So-yeon's placement in *Produce 101* but forgot her lyrics after that. The win went to Jeon So-yeon.

Finally, the show explained what would happen to Miryo, who had been left without a partner. The show's MC told Miryo that of the five groups she could pick to join whoever one she wanted; however, that group would have only one winner and two losers.

The fifth and final performance pitted Miryo, Euna Kim, and Ha Joo-yeon against each other. No training was given for this performance. Ha Joo-yeon chose to rap about Euna Kim twice, which was negatively seen by the other contestants. Ha Joo-yeon explained her decision in a confessional by saying that she chose Euna Kim as her opponent, therefore she would only rap about her. Euna Kim's second diss was towards Miryo; in it, she seemed to trip over her words and was visibly confused at what she had done. Miryo's two raps had no mistakes. Miryo was picked as the winner out of the three.

The third music producer, Kush, was given the option of picking the worst contestant from the bottom six; that contestant would then pick someone else from the bottom six and face them in a 1v1 diss battle. Whichever contestant lost the second diss battle would be eliminated from the show.

Kool Kid was chosen as the worst rapper; out of the other contestants at the bottom, she picked Euna Kim for the second diss battle.

The winners of the diss battle were shown the third track's beat; Kush explained that he wanted a summer song that would "*probably be a hit in the club*".

The show skipped to the second part of the performance over the third beat. This part of the mission would be performed to a small audience. Janey went first; she made no mistakes but was nervous, something that was noticed by Yuk Ji-dam, who commented on it in a confessional. The

second was Nada, whose performance was quite erotic; Kush commented that her version of the song was nothing like he had ever seen in South Korea. Ash-B's was also a bit erotic but slightly more aggressive; once again, Kush praised Ash-B's lyric delivery. The fourth on stage was Jeon So-yeon's; her performance was more interactive with the audience. The last performance was by Miryo, who spent most of the song standing in the same position; at the end, the other contestants and Kush all thought the performance was lacking.

The audience-voted winner was Jeon So-yeon; however, the show's MC announced that Kush could pick another contestant he liked. Kush said he liked Nada's and Ash-B's raps over the other contestants, making it clear he would pick between the two of them; he picked Nada due to the wordplay in her lyrics. Both Nada and Jeon So-yeon were given a combined track win.

At the start of episode five, the two contestants at risk of elimination were finally shown. Kool Kid forgot her lyrics right at the start of her rap, much like the previous diss battle between Jeon So-yeon and Kool Kid. To everyone's surprise, Euna Kim also forgot her lyrics. Kool Kid approached Euna Kim to hug her after she stopped rapping.

In the end, the other contestants voted to send Kool Kid home. Both Kool Kid and Euna Kim were in tears at the result. Kool Kid rubbed Euna Kim's shoulder and told her not to cry since she had won. After leaving the stage, Kool Kid said that she was still lacking a lot and would return to the stage once she was ready.

The fourth track mission was announced as *Unpretty Rapstar 3* versus *Show Me the Money 5*. All the contestants were unhappy; most of them commented in confessionals that they did not think they could beat any male rappers. The fourth track producer was announced as San E.

The show's MC explained that the mission would be voted on by the audience, and the ranks would work in the following way: the top ten rappers would be safe and move to the second part of the fourth track mission; from the eleventh to the nineteenth, they would have an elimination mission; and the contestant in the twentieth position would be immediately eliminated from the show.

The ten male rappers from SMTM5 were introduced. With each of the male rappers' entries, the female rappers gave their comments, most of which noted that they had no chance to win over an audience, especially with their career differences.

Both male and female rappers introduced themselves with quick raps. While the female rappers only commented positively on the male rappers, it was mostly the opposite; the comments coming from the male rappers were all negative.

The first performances were from women; the show quickly cut through them, showing the audience blankly looking at the stage. Then came a group of male rappers, who were all well received by the audience. Miryo and Jeon So-yeon were given more screen time, and both got the audience to cheer for them. A few more performances were quickly shown. Giant Pink was the last female rapper to perform; her rap was very energetic, and the crowd made a lot of noise for her. The male rappers and San E all praised Giant Pink's performance.

Giant Pink got second place, with the first place being taken by a male rapper. The other female rappers shared that they were happy for Giant Pink since she had nearly beaten all the other male contestants. Third place went to Miryo, which did not surprise most of the other contestants since she was already quite famous. Nada and Jeon So-yeon both got fifth place since they had the same number of votes. Yuk Ji-dam got eighth place.

The show MC announced that Grace got the nineteenth place, saving her from immediate elimination; however, she had to pick someone from the other contestants between the eleventh and eighteenth ranks to go against her in an elimination performance. Grace chose to go against Janey; this seemed to upset Janey, as she started to cry once backstage. In a confessional, Janey explained, while in tears, that having been picked after such a bad performance meant that she had to be even better in the following one.

Finally, the fourth track beat was revealed, and the track producer, San E, explained that the concept was "*Sticky*", so it would be good if the song was a bit sexier. The concept made the contestants mock Jeon So-yeon, who was only nineteen at the time of the show.

After each one of the contestants prepared their rap for the beat, they met on a new stage. One by one, the five female rappers contending for the fourth track performed on stage. Giant Pink and Nada performed without any mistakes. A scene of Jeon So-yeon training was shown; in it, she was clearly nervous, with her hands shaking and requesting to restart the song a few times; however, on the main stage, as soon as the beat began, the camera zoomed to show a different, more determined look on her face. Yuk Ji-dam's performance was about her body, which the other contestants said was predictable for her. The last to perform was Miryo, who was nervous, saying that she felt a bit old. Miryo looked towards the ceiling a few times while rapping, looking as if she could not remember her lyrics; she also did not move much from the center of the stage.

San E considered giving the track to either Nada or Jeon So-yeon, but in the end he picked Nada, explaining that her stage felt very natural.

Episode six started with the elimination match between Grace and Janey. Their training did not go smoothly, as Janey explained that she could not get over having been picked for the elimination match. In the performance, Grace went first; during her rap, a few of the other contestants commented that the beat sounded like it was made for Grace. During most of the performance and after it was done, the other contestants only spoke positively about Grace. Janey was eliminated from the show, meaning Grace had been saved from an elimination match for the second time.

After the elimination, the remaining contestants gathered at a swimming pool. A few of them commented on Nada's top and the size of her breasts. They danced along to a few songs while in the pool.

The show's MC appeared later, as the contestants were resting inside a house. They gathered outside and sat at a group of tables. The show's MC shared that they would now have an interim review; for this, every contestant would rank each other from the best to the worst rapper.

After everyone had voted, the show's MC announced that the last two ranked rappers would face each other in another elimination mission. The contestant ranked first was Jeon So-yeon. Surprising her, she jumped in the pool, and once out of it, she thanked everyone for voting for her. From second to seventh place, the contestants were as follows: in second place was Giant Pink; third was Yuk Ji-dam; fourth was Nada; fifth was Miryo; sixth was Grace; and seventh was Ash-B.

The last two contestants were Euna Kim and Ha Joo-yeon, who would now be up for elimination. The show's MC announced that the two had to pack their bags and leave immediately, much to the shock of everyone else. This decision did not sit well with Nada and Ash-B, with both saying it was malicious of the show to do such a thing.

After the two contestants up for elimination left, the remaining contestants began to eat. While they were eating, a new person appeared: Dean, a K-R&B singer, who was revealed to be the producer of the fifth and sixth tracks. The sixth track would have Suran, a South Korean singer, as the featured artist.

The contestants were given the option to pick which track they wanted by going through one of two doors. They got to pick their track based on the order they had previously received. The fifth track had Miryo, Jeon So-yeon, and Ash-B, while the sixth track had Yuk Ji-dam, Nada, Grace, and Giant Pink.

The show's MC entered the room to announce that the first part of this mission would be as a team, one for the fifth track and one for the sixth track. In each team, two contestants would be picked by the track's producer to be in a one-on-one match for the track.

During the rehearsal of the fifth track, Ash-B seemed to be struggling to remember her lyrics, but other than that, they did not have any problems. Their main performance suffered from a small mistake from Ash-B, as she slurred through one of her sentences. Track producer Dean picked Miryo and Jeon So-yeon for the final part of the mission.

The sixth track training seemed rather chaotic, with each contestant doing their own rap in the same room. In both the rehearsal and the main performance, Giant Pink made a mistake; other than that, the other contestants performed without any problems. Dean picked Yuk Ji-dam and Grace for the second part of the mission.

Jeon So-yeon and Miryo were announced as the first to perform. The two were shown training a lot, but especially Miryo, who kept training even after Jeon So-yeon had stopped. On the main stage, the two performed without any problems. Producer Dean commented in a confessional that he liked both of them and that the performance they put on was really fun.

It was then time for Yuk Ji-dam and Grace to perform the sixth track. The two did not seem to get along during their training, and eventually, after the camera crew asked Yuk Ji-dam who would win, she left the room. During their performance, the two contestants did not at all interact with each other. Most of the other contestants thought that Grace fit the song better.

At the end of the performances, Dean announced each track's winner. The winner of the fifth track was Miryo. The winner of the sixth track was Yuk Ji-dam, which seemed to shock the other contestants, who expected Grace to win.

Near the end of the episode, Ha Joo-yeon and Euna Kim each performed a solo stage. Ha Joo-yeon's stage theme was sexy, while Euna Kim's was sentimental. Both stages were flawless. Ha Joo-yeon was eliminated, having gotten fifty points less than Euna Kim. Ha Joo-yeon thanked everyone, giving each of the contestants a hug. As she left, she said that even though she was eliminated, she felt happy because she performed with confidence in her last stage.

Episode seven started with the show's MC explaining that the seventh track mission was divided into three parts; he then introduced Swings, a KHH rapper, as the seventh track producer. The first part of the mission was a diss battle, but this time with teams of two. The teams were selected in the following order: Euna Kim picked Yuk Ji-dam; Jeon So-yeon picked Nada; Grace picked Ash-B; this left Miryo and Giant Pink as a team.

The first diss battle would be Jeon So-yeon and Nada against Ash-B and Grace. For their training, Nada and Jeon So-yeon went hiking and read mean online comments about each other. Grace and Ash-B met up with SMTM5 contestant Killagramz, who gave them some tips on disses. Nada and So-yeon called Seo Chul-gu, a SMTM5 contestant, to ask about dissing. None of the four contestants made any mistakes in their performances, and the live audience seemed to enjoy the disses from both sides. Jeon So-yeon and Nada won the round with triple the votes.

The second diss battle was between Euna Kim and Yuk Ji-dam against Miryo and Giant Pink. Euna Kim and Yuk Ji-dam trained together without any problems. On the other side, Miryo had to assist Giant Pink with her lyrics, which had to be changed. In the final rehearsal, Giant Pink was still shown struggling to remember her rap. In the main performance, Giant Pink once again forgot her lyrics and poorly attempted to freestyle after that; however, Euna Kim also went on to forget her lyrics. Miryo and Giant Pink still won with a huge vote difference.

After the performances, the show's MC announced that two contestants from the losing team would be eliminated from the show. Meanwhile, the two teams that had won the diss battle would now have a collaborative performance: Jeon So-yeon and Nada would perform alongside C Jamm, a KHH rapper; Miryo and Giant Pink would perform with Black Nut, a KHH rapper. Of the four rappers in the collaborative performance, two would be picked by Swings for the final part of the seventh track mission.

Jeon So-yeon was a huge fan of C Jamm, so their first training session was sort of awkward, as Jeon So-yeon did not say much, leaving Nada and C Jamm to do most of the talking. On stage, both contestants rapped without any mistakes; in a confessional, C Jamm said that in terms of rap, he preferred Jeon So-yeon, but on stage, Nada was a better performer.

During Miryo and Giant Pink's training, the same issue kept occurring. Giant Pink could not remember her lyrics, even after Black Nut appeared to assist what they had done so far. During the performance, Giant Pink managed to remember her lyrics and did so convincingly, with Swings calling her the best rapper he had heard that round.

Swings picked Nada and Giant Pink for the final part of the seventh track mission. He explained that he picked them because they would fit his beat better than the other two contestants.

This match would pit the contestant with the most rings against the one with none. Nada's version of the song was emotional. Giant Pink started well but once again fumbled her lyrics a few times. Giant Pink's continuous mistakes made Swings comment "*You're not forgetting your*

lyrics because you're nervous, you're doing it because you've made it a habit." Nada got the seventh track, meaning she now had four tracks and, along with them, four rings.

Episode eight started with the performances of the four rappers at risk of elimination. The show's MC announced that their performances would be judged by a panel of eighteen rappers, all of whom were previously on *Unpretty Rapstar* or *Show Me the Money*.

The first on stage was Ash-B, who chose to mix two beats into one performance to show two sides of her rap. The second to perform was Grace, who tried to bring some higher energy, but the judging panel kept a straight face towards the performance. The third on stage was Euna Kim, who looked confident and made no mistakes in her performance. In the fourth and final stage was Yuk Ji-dam, who looked more nervous than in any previous performance; however, Yuk Ji-dam gained more energy after the hook. Ash-B and Yuk Ji-dam were saved from elimination.

Euna Kim and Grace both shared some tearful parting words, thanking the show and the other contestants. Both promised to continue their careers and improve their rap before leaving the stage.

The show's MC announced that the following mission would be the quarterfinals; this mission was a one-on-one performance match. The contestants randomly picked their opponents by standing under a closed banner, which would then open to reveal who they were up against. The contestants were matched in the following order: Jeon So-yeon got Miryo; Nada got Ash-B, which left Giant Pink and Yuk Ji-dam.

The first to perform were Miryo and Jeon So-yeon. Miryo would be the first between them. During her training, Miryo was visited by her group members, who encouraged her. The performance looked to be inspired by "Tron", using suits that lit up in the darkness; it also had a featured artist, Jo Hyunah of Urban Zakapa. Before Jeon So-yeon's performance, she was shown backstage interacting with I.O.I member Jeon Somi, who had been in *Produce 101* but, unlike Jeon So-yeon, managed to be in the top eleven and make her debut. Jeon So-yeon was also shown meeting with Cheetah, the winner of *Unpretty Rapstar 1*. In the meeting, Cheetah gave Jeon So-yeon some tips on what to do. Jeon So-yeon's performance had a featured artist, Superbee, a KHH rapper; the overall song was fun while keeping it somewhat cute.

The second match was Nada against Ash-B. Nada was picked as the first to perform. During the training, Nada explained that her group, Wa\$\$up, had never managed to become popular while active, so she wanted to have them alongside her since it would be the first time they could perform on a bigger stage. The other members of Wa\$\$up teared up while talking

about Nada and her dedication to music. Nada's performance also had a featured guest, Park Mi-kyun, a South Korean singer. During the performance, Nada forgot a verse but quickly picked it up at the first chorus; the rest of the stage had a lot of support from the fans and the other contestants backstage. For her training, Ash-B met up with her mother and took her out to eat. Ash-B's song was the emotional story of her mother's life; it featured South Korean singer Son Seung-yeon.

Unlike the first match, the results of this match were shared after the two contestants had performed. Ash-B won with double Nada's votes; this meant Nada was eliminated from the show. Ash-B thanked everyone, followed by Nada giving a short speech on how she was not upset that she had lost and that it had been a fierce competition.

Finally, near the closing moments of episode eight, the winner of the first match was revealed as Jeon So-yeon, shocking everyone. Jeon So-yeon and Miryo thanked each other for their efforts, and the two walked backstage. In a confessional, Miryo said that even though she was eliminated, she was thankful to have received so many cheers from the audience.

Episode nine started with the third and last match in the quarterfinal, Yuk Ji-dam against Giant Pink. Yuk Ji-dam was chosen as the first to perform. In her training footage, Yuk Ji-dam's father visited her home; he brought food and wine, which they both ate. Yuk Ji-dam explained that the comments made about her since her first appearance in *Show Me the Money 3* were very hurtful, especially since she did not have a mother to rely on. Yuk Ji-dam's song was about the hardships she had gone through; it featured South Korean singer Kim Na-young. Giant Pink was the last contestant to perform in the quarterfinals. While training, Giant Pink called her mother for support. Giant Pink's song was more aggressive Hip Hop; the featured artist was myunDo, a KHH rapper.

Giant Pink won the last match, obtaining almost all of the points and shocking both the audience and the other contestants. After being asked how she felt about being eliminated, Yuk Ji-dam began to cry, and Giant Pink walked from the other side of the stage to hug her. Yuk Ji-dam shared that she had also made lyrical mistakes before and that Giant Pink was very talented, so she did not mind losing to her.

Later, without the audience's presence, the show's MC announced that for the semi-finals there wouldn't just be three people, but in fact, four. The audience had an extra vote to save one of the three eliminated contestants. Nada won the vote, returning to the competition.

The eighth and final track producer was revealed as Dok2, a KHH rapper and music producer. The theme for the final track was "Beauty", and Dok2 explained it was "*slightly strong*" so the contestants could express themselves.

For the semi-finals, Giant Pink was given the option to pick the matches. Giant Pink chose to go against Ash-B, while Jeon So-yeon would go against Nada.

The first to perform in the semi-final was Jeon So-yeon. Jeon So-yeon was shown eating in a restaurant with her father; during this scene, they talked about her upbringing and how hard she had worked to debut. Jeon So-yeon's song was emotional and featured South Korean singer DAVIL.

The second to perform was Nada, who, before her performance, went to the beach to sign autographs. After the sun had fallen, Nada called her parents, who gave her some fighting words. Nada's song was old-school-inspired and featured two artists, Koonta and Don Mills.

The third to perform was Ash-B, who decided to practice by busking on the street. Ash-B explained that she was taking this stage as if it were the last and would give it her all. Ash-B's song had stronger rap and lower synths; it featured KHH rapper Microdot.

Giant Pink's performance was not shown in the ninth episode; instead, the show presented the result of Nada and Jeon So-yeon's match. Nada won by a small margin, meaning she was one of the two finalists. Jeon So-yeon gave her final speech. She apologized for seeming somewhat arrogant and explained that she was still young. Jeon So-yeon thanked everyone and left the stage on a piggyback ride from Nada.

Episode ten started immediately with Giant Pink's preparations for her performance. Giant Pink traveled back to her hometown to visit her friends and family. All of whom showed their support for her. She also surprised Ash-B by appearing at her busking session and performing in it. Giant Pink's song was old-school Hip Hop and featured both Boi B, a KHH rapper, and Sanchez, a KHH rapper and singer.

After Giant Pink's performance, the results of the second match between her and Ash-B were revealed. Giant Pink won with triple the votes of Ash-B. When asked by the show's MC how she felt about making it to the final, Giant Pink apologized to the audience that so far on the show she had disappointed them but promised to show a better version of herself in the final. Ash-B simply said that she was thankful she even made it to the semi-finals. Both contestants walked off stage with their hands on each other's shoulders.

The show's MC explained that the final would be divided into two parts: a solo stage and a team performance. The solo stage performance theme was "*Song that proves me*".

Instead of showing the contestants training, the show played some of the already shown footage from the previous episodes, intertwined with confessionals from the two finalists talking about their journey so far. Nada's solo song was emotional; the whole performance was solely Nada standing in the middle of the stage with one light on her. Giant Pink's song and performance were more energetic and had her running around the stage, hyping up the crowd. After the two performances, the results of the solo stage were revealed: Giant Pink won by a small margin, meaning Nada could still turn it around in the team performance.

Before the team performance, the two contestants were shown training together. Nada said that she felt like Giant Pink's lyrics were dissing her, so she would use that as her driving force. The performance was flawless from both sides.

After the audience voted on their favorite, the show's MC shared that they would have to leave before the final results were announced. All of the previously eliminated contestants were present to hear the winner. The show's MC asked if they were rooting for one of the contestants in particular, and the answers were mixed.

Finally, after some stalling, the winner was announced as Giant Pink. The final track's producer, Dok2, approached Giant Pink and gave her the track ring. Giant Pink thanked everyone who had been by her side and promised to keep making music after the show. The other contestants also talked about their appearance on the show, including Nada, who congratulated Giant Pink and everyone else for working so hard. The contestants bowed down as the show's MC announced the end of Unpretty Rapstar 3. The show ended with the last confessionals from all the contestants giving their final words.

3.3 High School Rapper

High School Rapper, also known as School Rapper and most commonly written as HSR, is a spin-off of *Show Me the Money*, unlike the original, which was open to all ages this show pits high schoolers against each other. It also airs a new season every year on MNET, however, in 2022 it did not release a new season.

Due to its similar format to *Show Me the Money*, HSR is also more male oriented, so the following research of the seasons is a fully detailed description of every moment female

contestants have on the show. This series is less controversial and more mindful of its participants, due to the age gap it covers.

The first season of HSR had a significantly different format from SMTM. It had 8 episodes, but four rounds. The first round, the auditions, took three episodes, as did the second round, which was a cypher; this meant that the last two rounds, which were 1v1's and the finals, only took one episode each. HSR2/3 are in many ways the same as SMTM, however, with only 8 episodes each season, that cut back the rounds to six rounds each season. HSR4 had 10 episodes and eight rounds, around the same that SMTM9 had.

3.3.1 The First Season

Mentors :

- **YDG**
- **Swings**
- **Deepflow**
- **Mad Clown**
- **Jessi**
- **Seo Chul-gu & Giriboy**

High School Rapper debuted on television on February 10, 2017. The show's initial concept was to do auditions in schools across South Korea, where they would search for the best rappers and pit the schools against each other.

The first episode took no time to present the show, instead immediately kicking off the first audition. Starting with Hyomyeong High School's 1st Grade, Kim Hye-joong, they were called onto the stage by the show's MC, who used male pronouns. Kim Hyejoong was wearing the male version of the uniform with pants; they also had short hair, but as they grabbed the microphone, they surprised everyone by announcing "*I'm a girl*", causing the surrounding students to start a commotion. The show's MC apologized for referring to her using male pronouns; she answered that it was all right because she was usually mistaken for a boy. Kim Hyejoong explained her rap was about the stress students like her felt as they had to start choosing their careers.

During her rap, Kim Hyejoong forgot her lyrics but quickly recovered as some of the female students in the crowd cheered her on. At the end of her rap, producer Mad Clown commented that her lyrics told a story of their own.

The show then explained how the auditions worked. This season, the auditions were similar to the second round of SMTM, the sixty-second round. Although not fully explained, it had pre-screened the contestants through video auditions. The show passed through six different districts in South Korea; in each district, they picked nine contestants for the second round. The audience of students and the judges voted on the rapper auditioning; if their score was higher than the person in position nine, they took their place. At the end of all performances in a district, the rappers that managed to stay in the top nine made it to the second round. As it finished its explanation, the show skipped through some of the future contestants, a few of whom were women.

Halfway through the first episode, the camera panned through some of the female contestants waiting and finally stopped at mentor Jessi. Jessi stated that she had been staring at the girls because she wanted a powerful female and was tired of only hearing boys. Hanlim Multi Art 2nd Grade, Song Han-hee, and Korea Art 1st Grade, Lee Ji-eun, were then announced.

Song Han-hee was the first to be shown on stage; after she presented herself, the show's MC asked about her "*very special relationship with School Rapper*". Song Han-hee explained in a confessional that she was in the teaser song for the show as a female representative, and that meant she should take first rank. Lee Ji-eun was shown in a pre-recorded video looking at the teaser, then saying that while Song Han-hee was prettier than her, Lee Ji-eun was a better rapper; behind the camera, one of the show's crew questioned if she could win in terms of beauty, and Lee Ji-eun laughed, saying she could not.

Lee Ji-eun explained that when men told her that she was "*good for a woman*", she felt like that was prejudice, so she was going to crack that stereotype by going up against male contestants.

Song Han-hee performed first, but throughout it, she kept stopping to remember her lyrics. When she seemed to completely forget her lyrics, the show cut to Lee Ji-eun, who looked confused. In a voice-over, Lee Ji-eun shared that if someone trained hard enough, there shouldn't be this many mistakes.

After the performance, mentor Mad Clown was disappointed that Song Han-hee had forgotten her lyrics. He shared in a confessional that so many mistakes had made him wonder if students came unprepared. Mentor Jessi seemed disappointed; she shared that she wanted to find someone more like Yuk Ji-dam, so that even if the person had a unique style, she could help them evolve.

Song Han-hee was then shown walking back to the participants' bench, questioning herself on how she had failed, and covering her face even as she sat down.

Lee Ji-eun was called on stage; after her introduction, Lee Ji-eun said that the world is full of teenagers that want to be entertainers and rappers, but most adults reject that kind of dream; however, no one could break her dreams of getting to the "*High Class*" of rappers.

Lee Ji-eun's rap was powerful and commanding. After it ended, mentor Swings started the comments by saying that out of everyone he'd seen so far, she was the one he'd given the highest score to; he then shared that when he saw her come out, he expected another "*cute girl*"; however, he got another Kisum, referencing the contestant from SMTM3 and *Unpretty Rapstar*. Swings said that he truly felt like she was very serious about rapping. Mentor Jessi cut him off by saying that instead of Kisum, she felt more the presence of Yuk Ji-dam, hearing that Lee Ji-eun looked excited.

The rank was announced on screen, and Lee Ji-eun was third in the district. Lee Ji-eun thanked everyone and exited the stage; in a confessional, she promised to work hard and show how much she could grow.

Nearing the end of the episode, the top nine for the district were shown, with Lee Ji-eun still among them.

In episode two, the show presented one of the most famous music schools in South Korea, SOPA, where a lot of famous K-pop idols had studied. After the presentation, the first student called on stage was SOPA's 1st Grade, Moon Ji-hyo, a female student. In a backstage clip, Moon Ji-hyo was shown walking into a room consisting mostly of males, who almost immediately started joking amongst each other. In six confessionals, male contestants commented on her beauty, calling her a model and cute. As footage of her training was shown, Moon Ji-hyo shared that many people were rooting for her, and she was thankful for them. Even if she was not the best, she was going to try her hardest.

Mentor Seo Chul-gu commented that if she could rap well with her looks, this was the birth of a superstar.

Moon Ji-hyo's performance was unfortunate, as she forgot her lyrics soon after it started and was unable to successfully restart her rap. The song stopped, and the show's MC stepped back on stage, exclaiming that the pressure had been too much since so many boys had cheered her on. The MC asked if there was anyone sad about what had happened, and a boy in the audience raised his hand and shouted that he was, making the mentors and Moon Ji-eun laugh. Mentor Swings

also shared that he too was sad; he referred to Moon Ji-eun as a distant family member and said they would see each other again. With that, Moon Ji-eun walked off the stage.

Near the end of the second episode, another district's top nine was formed; at number nine there was a girl, Kim Mi-jeong, who had not been heard or seen so far; however, in a voice-over as she was on screen, Kim Mi-jeong said that her district was the strongest because all the rappers were talented.

The last audition of episode two was Young B, a male rapper, previously known for SMTM4 and SMTM5. As he walked on stage, the show's MC questioned if he had a crush on Moon Ji-eun. Young B got flustered but answered that he had only seen her rap and thought she was cute. Once again, the MC asked if he had a crush on her, and mentor Deepflow was shown saying "*He does.*", instead of answering, Young B simply did a thumbs up gesture. Seeing this, the MC told Moon Ji-eun to stand up and asked her the same question, but of course towards Young B. She also gave a thumbs up, making the crowd gasp. Young B was not looking her way, so he asked what the answer was; the show's MC answered that she did like him.

At the end of the audition, Young B got the highest rank in the district; the MC called it the best rank with a lot of love; the camera then cut to Moon Ji-eun. This district did not have any women in the top nine.

About twenty-eight minutes into episode three, two top nines from different districts were shown; in the first one, there were two girls amongst them, and in the second, only one; however, no names were shown.

After all contestants were picked, the districts were shown one by one. The first district was Gangseo, which had no females; the second was East Gyeongin, which had Kim Mi-jeong; the third was Busan, which had two females; the fourth was Gangdong, with Lee Ji-eun in it; the fifth was Gwangju Jeolla, which had one girl; and the sixth and last was West Gyeongin, which had no women. Meaning that for the second round, there were five female participants.

The second round was then explained: the mentors would pick one of the ranks from 1 to 9, and all the contestants with that rank had to participate in a cypher. There were three rounds; each rapper was scored individually by the mentors; at the end, the scores were added, and the districts with the most points got to pick their mentors first.

The 3rd rank was called first; there were no women in it. The second rank called was the 6th, which also had no women. The last rank was the 1st rank, which once again did not have any women. Making it so that the second round did not have any women participating.

In episode four, the third round was announced as a 1v1v1 round amongst the members of each district, in which only one person would pass; this meant that out of the fifty-five contestants, only eighteen would move on to the fourth round.

The second group of the third round had Lee Ji-eun, who introduced the group's song as being about their aspirations. The show cut back to the team deciding which beat they wanted to work with for the performance; Lee Ji-eun seemed to be losing her patience, and in a confessional, she admitted that she was trying to rush the others to pick a beat because she needed time to make her strategy; after all, it was a survival mission. The three contestants then picked their order in the performance, with Lee Ji-eun accepting to be the last. Going back even further in the show, when the mentor Mad Clown asked Bang Jae-min why he had picked Lee Ji-eun, another contestant commented "*Because she's a girl?*". Lee Ji-eun shared that "*it*", without specifying if it was hearing the comment or being picked by Bang Jae-min, made her want to cry; even though she thought Bang Jae-min had better chances, she was going to win this round.

At the rehearsal, contestant Kim Sun-woo commented that out of the three Lee Ji-eun was the most powerful one. Mentor Mad Clown shared that after hearing them, if he had to pick a contestant he would go for Lee Ji-eun.

During the performance Lee Ji-eun showed the same power as what could be seen from the rehearsal, and rapped without any problems.

The show's MC questioned Lee Ji-eun about the move at the start of her rap, where she pushed one of the guys on the shoulder; Lee Ji-eun said that Bang Jae-min had come up with that. In a confessional, Bang Jae-min said that since they were two boys and one girl, he wanted something that would make her stand out, so he proposed that move to Lee Ji-eun, and she liked it.

Mentor Mad Clown started his comments with Lee Ji-eun; he shared that her pronunciation was really good, as was her rap tone. The final decision seemed to be between her and Bang Jae-min; although Mad Clown said that Lee Ji-eun was very relaxed and her voice was steady, he picked Bang Jae-min.

Lee Ji-eun shared in her last confessional that it was sad, but she was glad to have participated; she tried her hardest and applauded her own confidence.

The next woman to appear was Kim Mi-jeong, joined by two already successful rappers from the Dickids crew; when the pairing was announced, Kim Mi-jeong dropped her head to her hands and said in a voice-over "*I'm annoyed*".

Their performance started, and Kim Mi-jeong was the first to rap. She made no mistakes, but the show cut at the end of her rap to a confessional of a contestant, who claimed to be sorry for her since she wouldn't pass. Then came a confessional from mentor Swings, in which he said he did not think Kim Mi-jeong was at the same level as the other contestants.

In the end, no one commented further about her performance, and another rapper on her team passed, meaning Kim Mi-jeong was eliminated.

At the start of episode five, the show quickly skipped through the rest of the contestants picked for the top 18, and none of them were women. Confirming that this was the end of women in HSR1.

3.3.2 High School Rapper 2

Mentor Teams :

- **Team:** Groovyroom (Park Gyu-jeong and Lee Hwi-min)
- **Team:** Hangzoo & Boi B
- **Team:** San E & Cheetah
- **Team:** Deepflow

High School Rapper 2 aired on television on February 23, 2018. This season of *High School Rapper* would dramatically decrease the number of contestants for the show; out of one thousand and five hundred students that applied, only thirty-two actually made it onto the show.

Episode one started with the introduction of the contestants one by one, separating them in different room's made to look like classes. This time the separation wasn't their district, but their school year.

The first grade to be shown was prep school. The second student to enter was a girl; as she walked in, she waved at the student already sitting down, and he waved back, smiling widely. The girl was then introduced as Seoul Foreign Language High Prep School's Ha Seon-ho. As she sat down, Ha Seon-ho began questioning the male contestant, Lee Ye-chan, who didn't respond. At the end, she said that he looked good; hearing this, Lee Ye-chan answered that he did not know

how to respond; he couldn't even speak properly because it was hard for him to maintain eye contact. Ha Seon-ho admitted to having seen his audition video and shared that she found the way he dressed "*very unusual*". It then played an introduction video to Ha Seon-ho, in which she explained she had watched the first season and thought it would be cool to see her name pop up on the screen. Ha Seon-ho shared that her appeal when rapping was that she became a completely different person, someone who thinks they are the best.

The third student walked in and greeted the other two; Lee Ye-chan said he was Park Ji-won, his friend, prompting Ha Seon-ho to ask about their friendship. Lee Ye-chan questioned Ha Seon-ho about her English skills, and she returned the question, making Park Ji-won answer that Lee Ye-chan's English was horrible and he was training through an app.

The first to enter the 1st graders' room was Kim Eun-ji from Busan's Sungmo Girls' High School; after her, a boy named Ji Min-hyuk walked in; in a voice-over, Kim Eun-ji called him handsome; Ji Min-hyuk asked if he could seat next to her; she accepted but was confused why he wanted to do so. After they greeted each other, another student walked in, Park Jin-oh, who sat on the other side of Kim Eun-ji; she looked at him confused but then laughed at the situation.

Ji Min-hyuk questioned Kim Eun-ji about her dialect; Park Jin-oh also commented that she did not sound like she was from Seoul; Ji Min-hyuk guessed that she was from Busan, which Kim Eun-ji confirmed. As Ji Min-hyuk had guessed so fast, Kim Eun-ji said "*I have nothing to say*", in the Busan dialect; hearing this Ji Min-hyuk joked that she should not say things in such a "*girl crush*" way as it was "*scary*".

In the 2nd grade, the second contestant to walk in was Lee Ji-eun, from the previous season of HSR. Lee Ji-eun sat down further away from the other contestant in the room and asked him if they were from the same school; however, he did not know what school she meant. Another contestant walked in and almost immediately recognized Lee Ji-eun; she complimented his watch, and he answered by saying its price; realizing that might have been a mistake, he covered his mouth and apologized.

The second person to walk in on the 3rd grade was from Jungang Girls' High, Park Young-seo, who laughed a bit as she walked in once she noticed the rapper already inside the room; she had seen his audition video and wanted to meet him.

The show cut between the room with the 2nd and 3rd grades, and after a few presentations, another girl could be seen inside the 3rd grade; she had not been introduced.

Thirty minutes into the first episode, the first round was announced as the Grade Cypher; after each grade's performance, the mentor teams would vote on the contestants, and the student with the most points from each grade would then become a team leader and have the opportunity to pick their members.

The first grade called on stage was the prep school; as Lee Ye-chan was presenting himself, he confessed he came to the show for many reasons, but one of them was "*to come see pretty noonas*." (Noona is the Korean word for an older female friend). After he said so, another contestant asked him who was the prettiest girl on the show. He pointed to the middle, where Kim Eun-ji was shown covering her face while laughing, which quickly turned into confusion as he said Lee Ji-eun, who was behind her.

After Lee Ye-chan, it was Ha Seon-ho's time for an introduction, in which she shared that amongst the successful candidates who made it onto the 3rd round of SMTM6, she was the only middle school student. As footage passed from SMTM6, Ha Seon-ho explained in a voice-over that she was passed in the first round by Jay Park, got three passes in the second round, and lost to Jo Woochan in the third round.

The second beat of the prep school cypher started, and both Lee Ye-chan and Ha Seon-ho approached the microphone, but Lee Ye-chan pushed Ha Seon-ho away and took it for himself. At the end of his rap, Lee Ye-chan handed the microphone over to Ha Seon-ho, and throughout her rap, the camera cut to other contestants surprised by how good she sounded. The first-place voting was clearly between Lee Ye-chan and Ha Seon-ho; however, Lee Ye-chan came out on top. Ha Seon-ho admitted that she thought she would have won, so she looked quite disappointed.

3rd Grade stepped on stage, and Park Young-seo introduced herself by saying she had seen the female rappers in HSR1 and was upset at their performance, so she decided to join; she had also seen Lee Ji-eun's audition video and thought she could do better. There was another girl on stage, but she didn't introduce herself.

Two beats passed, and none of the women rapped. As the third beat started, "8 Mile" by Eminem, Park Young-seo grabbed the microphone. The other contestants said in confessionals that rapping over a song like that was really hard; however, Park Young-seo did not even start her rap, putting the microphone back on the stand. In the end, neither of the women in this group was shown rapping.

For the 2nd grade, Lee Ji-eun introduced herself as the rapper who had lost to Bang Jae-min in the previous season. Lee Ji-eun explained in a confessional that she was upset that she had lost to Bang Jae-min; so if she were to lose to him again, she would never be able to face herself

again. A contestant asked her if she was confident that she would win this year, and Lee Ji-eun confidently said she would. Another contestant commented on that by saying "*she dreams big.*", then got shy as the boys teased him.

During the performance, Lee Ji-eun commented in a confessional that she would rather have been against the pre-school students; she was then shown grabbing the microphone. After the first verse, Lee Ji-eun forgot her lyrics and never truly restarted her rap, only saying a few more lines before letting go of the microphone; the mentors seemed to be disappointed, especially Cheetah, who slumped on her chair.

The second episode started with the first round for the 1st grade. There were two girls on stage, one of whom was the previously mentioned Kim Eun-ji; however, neither was introduced or shown rapping.

In the end, none of the first-place team leaders were women. The teams were quickly made, and none of the women were shown as important rappers to be added to the teams.

The second round was the Team Representative Decision Contest, a competition within each team instead of against other teams, where only four out of the eight team members would pass. This round worked the same way as the first round of HSR1: the contestants would go one by one on stage and do a sixty-second rap; at the end of each performance, the mentor would score them, and if their score was surpassed and they were no longer in the top 4, they were eliminated.

The first group to perform was Seok Min's team. The fourth contestant called was Park Young-seo, and as she stepped on stage, she explained that her song was going to be about trauma; when Park Young-seo was young, her husky voice was a disadvantage, but as she started to rap, it became a weapon, so she wanted to encourage other people to look at their shortcomings as a positive thing.

Park Young-seo's performance seemed to have one minor mistake, which was only really noticeable due to her reaction. After her performance, mentor San E praised her for making a rap about her voice and questioned if anyone had ever heard lyrics like that before; mentor Park Gyu-jeong from Groovyroom answered that it must be the first time in the world. Park Young-seo scored 141 points, which placed her in the 4th rank. Even though the rapper after her made a mistake, he was ranked first, pushing Park Young-seo to fifth place, which meant she was eliminated.

The second group called was Kim Haon's; the first member to perform was Ha Seon-ho, who introduced herself to the judges by saying "*I feel like I'm a real school rapper because I'm in high school.*", (referencing her previous appearance in SMTM6). The show's MC asked Ha Seon-ho which show she preferred between SMTM and HSR. Ha Seonho explained that to her SMTM was a passing experience because, at the time, she did not have any greed, but this time she did, so she was a bit more nervous. Mentor San E asked if she was ready to win, to which she answered that she always put in the work; hearing this, Cheetah was seen smiling and nodding. Contestant Lee Byeong-jae, known for his lack of emotion, shared that she was someone he wanted to see because he fell in love with her rap. The show shared footage of him reacting to Ha Seon-ho's rap as he smiled and danced while she performed.

Ha Seon-ho explained that she liked to rap about the fact that no matter the skills or interests students have, they are ignored and forced to study; this made her upset, so Ha Seon-ho made a song for adults to understand a student's point of view. The show's MC asked Ha Seon-ho about what she was looking to do on the show, and she answered that she wanted to keep writing about her life and friends because she wanted to represent other teenagers.

The performance began, and much like mentioned in her first introduction, Ha Seon-ho seemed more confident once she started rapping. After the rap ended, the show's MC asked Ha Seon-ho how she felt about her rap. Ha Seon-ho admitted that when people told her they were nervous, she did not understand, but now that made sense to her, as she did feel nervous this time. Mentor Hangzoo, the winner of SMTM6, commented that after just a year she had grown a lot; he was surprised and said her rap was very stylish. Mentor Deppflow said that it looked like something mysterious was standing on stage. Both Groovyroom mentors commented that her eyes changed intensity just as she started rapping. Ha Seon-ho got 161 points and, for now, was the 1st rank in the group.

Episode three began with a reminder that Kim Haon's team was not confirmed yet. It then showed the third team, Kim Yoon-ho's, which had a female contestant in it; however, she was not shown performing, and once the top four were announced, she was not in it; from the badge on her chest, it seems like her name was Bin Ha-neul.

The last team was Lee Ye-chan's, which had three female students. The first female contestant called on stage was Lee Ji-eun. She shared that while training, the friends that trained alongside her were debuting, and that worried her, so she made the following song to comfort herself by saying that in the end, her hard work would pay off. Before her performance began, mentor Cheetah said "*I hope she does well.*".

The performance went by without any flaws; unlike the last round, she did not forget her lyrics. Mentor Boi B commented that while he had made preconceptions about her, she rapped very smoothly; the rap fit the beat really well, and he appreciated that. Mentor San E said that when Lee Ji-eun rapped, she was very different from when she talked; in her introduction, she looked more like an idol trainee, and he would rather if she changed her attitude to be more like when she raps. Lee Ji-eun got 121 points, which meant she was in 2nd place.

At the end of Lee Ye-chan team's performances, the MC announced the top 4, with Lee Ji-eun being the only female student on the team to make it, ending in 4th place. The other two female contestants were not shown performing; one of them was Kim Eun-ji, and the other was Alice, the latter of whom had not been shown so far.

Fifty minutes into the third episode, the top four on Kim Haon's team were confirmed, with Ha Seon-ho confirmed to have ended in 3rd place.

As Lee Yee-chan's team went up on stage to receive their team jackets, Lee Ji-eun shared that since she had made it so far, she planned on doing her best moving forward.

Once again as it gets to this point, only the teams with female contestants will be discussed.

The teams finally got their chance to choose their mentors; to decide the priority of choosing, the teams' scores were added, and team Kim Haon was up first, and they picked Groovyroom. Since Lee Ye-chan's team ranked last, they were immediately grouped with mentor Deepflow.

Mentor Deepflow took Lee Ye-chan's team to a boxing academy, where Lee Ji-eun admitted she did not exercise much. Kim Haon's team gathered at his house, later being joined by Groovyroom; Ha Seon-ho did not say anything in this clip. Back at Lee Yechan's team, they were shown training, but as they did so, their mentor, Deepflow, was falling behind. Seeing this, Ha Seon-ho stopped and looked at him smiling; in a confessional, Lee Ji-eun shared that he only looked like a boxing gym trainer on the outside. As they trained punches, Lee Ji-eun was clearly softer and lacked experience, which made Lee Ye-chan mock her lightly in a confessional; however, as the time came for Lee Ye-chan to throw punches, he too was inexperienced, making Lee Ji-eun comment on her own confessional "*He was similar to me though?*". Kim Ha-on's team spent some more time at his house and then went out shopping for clothes; here Ha Seon-ho could be seen with Groovyroom, but there was no sound to the scene, only music.

Near the end of the third episode, the third round was announced as the first team round. In this round, the teams would be divided into two groups: the first group would make a rap about

a poem, and the second would make a rap based on a novel. The voting for this round was made by students and previous HSR contestants. Deepflow picked Lee Ye-chan and Lee Ji-eun as a group. Groovyroom picked Lee Byung-jae and Ha Seon-ho.

Episode four began with the groups' opponent pairings, which were picked at random using cards with their names facing down. The first groups to be decided were the ones based on poems; the show's MC picked two of the groups' cards; Lee Byung-jae and Ha Seon-ho got matched with Bae Yeon-seo and Oh Dam-ryul. The groups based on the novels were not shown in this segment.

The second performance of the episode called on stage was Lee Byung-jae and Ha Seon-ho against Bae Yeon-seo and Oh Dam-ryul. All of the comments made as both teams got on stage for their introductions were between Lee Byung-jae and Bae Yeon-seo, as they were from the same crew, Kiff Clan.

Lee Byung-jae explained that they had picked a poem called "*With a Burning Thirst*" by Kim Chiha. It then showed the moment the two rappers decided which poem they wanted and what they wanted to rap about. Since the poem they picked was about desire, Ha Seon-ho explained that she came on the show to represent teenagers, so it would only make sense to rap about what most teenagers want. Lee Byung-jae agreed, and the two set out to interview the other contestants about what they desired. Ha Seon-ho interviewed Lee Ji-eun about what she wanted the most, and Lee Ji-eun answered honestly that she wanted to debut soon so she could give back to her parents.

At their first meeting with mentors Groovyroom, they discussed the lyrics of their rap; Ha Seon-ho explained that she wrote about what teenagers wanted; since she too was going to school, taking private lessons and tutoring, what she really desired was freedom. While her rap was about school, Lee Byung-jae's was about not going to school and living in a small studio, making mentor Park Gyu-jeong comment that they were essentially the opposite of each other.

The two contestants performed for the mentors; while rapping, Ha Seon-ho looked at the lyrics on her phone. Park Gyu-jeong shared that he was disappointed with Ha Seon-ho since she didn't seem confident; mentor Lee Hwi-min explained that the fact she was looking at her phone affected her confidence. In a confessional, Ha Seon-ho shared that she wanted to survive the round, so she would work extra hard even if she had to stop sleeping. In the rehearsal, only Lee Byung-jae was shown rapping.

The performance went by without mistakes, and at the end, the mentors commented on different confessionals. Mentor Hangzoo said he was shocked when Ha Seon-ho started the

second verse. Mentor Deepflow commented that he had not seen such a rap from a female rapper in a long time, especially from one her age, and that Ha Seon-ho was amazing.

Both groups stood on stage waiting for the scores to show on the screen ahead of them; as they did, the contestant and mentors appeared to be all in shock, except for Lee Byung-jae and Ha Seon-ho. The score was shown to be 85:15, with the winning side being Bae Yeon-seo and Oh Dam-ryul. In a voice-over, Ha Seon-ho said "*It was terrible.*", as she looked at the screen.

Episode five started by announcing the grouping of Kim Yoon-ho and Bang Jae-min versus Lee Ye-chan and Lee Ji-eun. Mentor Deepflow shared that he wanted Lee Ji-eun to go against Bang Jae-min since she had lost to him the previous year, so it would be a revenge match. As he shared with the team who their opponents would be, Lee Ji-eun went from smiling to upset. In a confessional, Bang Jae-min said that, much like HSR, he would be sending her home again.

Later on stage, Lee Ji-eun shared that they had picked a novel called "*The Camellias*" by Kim You-jeong, a young love story between a girl and a boy. The show's MC questioned her about a rumor that the two had gone on a "*fun date*", and so pre-recorded footage began. In it, Lee Ji-eun explained that they had gone to visit Kim You-jeong's birthplace to gain inspiration for their lyrics, adding that it was also because she wanted to "*make memories with Ye-chan.*". The two entered a clothes store and requested to try on clothes from the era of the novel; once dressed, Lee Ye-chan joked that it gave off a "*cute vibe*". They then tried to reenact a scene from the novel and played around; Lee Ye-chan said the moments they spent together gave them experiences to draw on when writing their lyrics.

A few clips of the two in their training sessions were shown, with Lee Ji-eun saying in a voice-over that other teams considered them the weakest, so they had to train extra hard for no one to be able to say that again.

Their performance was stable; however, there were no comments aside from the mentors of the opposite group, who said the performance made them anxious. At the end of the opponent group's performance, the mentors gave comments on both groups: on Lee Ye-chan and Lee Ji-eun's stage, mentor Hangzoo said their performance was "*everything that is pure.*"; mentor Hwimin shared that he paid close attention to the lyrics and they were cute, young, and fresh, something he really enjoyed. After the comments ended, the voting score appeared on screen as 81:19, with the winning side being Kim Yoon-ho and Bang Jae-min.

At the end of all performances, the mentors had to eliminate one person from each of the losing groups'. Deepflow had to pick first between Lee Ye-chan and Lee Ji-eun; he quickly picked Lee Ye-chan. Deepflow apologized to Lee Ji-eun, but Lee Ye-chan "*fit the next picture*" he had

in mind. The last elimination was between Lee Byung-jae and Ha Seon-ho, and mentors Groovyroom found the decision hard, as Park Gyu-jeong shared with Lee Hwi-min that Ha Seon-ho had done better in this performance; however, Lee Hwi-min rebutted by saying that Lee Byung-jae had better control of the audience. Groovyroom picked Lee Byung-jae, but he did not even raise his head; in a voice-over, Lee Byung-jae shared that he thought he had been picked over a better rapper. Ha Seon-ho told Lee Byung-jae that since he had defeated her, he deserved to win, and that she hoped he would advance in the competition so she could see more of him.

As the show's MC announced the end of the shoot, the teams began exiting the room, and Ha Seon-ho began crying as both Groovyroom mentors approached her; as she started to cry, Lee Byung-jae left the studio. Lee Ji-eun was also shown crying; Yoon Byung-ho, a male contestant, poked her and jokingly told her to stop crying, to which she nodded and smiled. Lee Byung-jae eventually returned, crying. In a confessional, he admitted that Ha Seon-ho was the only female rapper on the show that he truly acknowledged, so he had to keep going for her. A few clips of previous Ha Seon-ho's moments passed as she spoke in a voice-over; Ha Seon-ho shared that this was the first time that she met so many people her age that rapped, so she had gained a lot of good memories.

The show asked the eliminated contestants a few questions as footage of them passed; Lee Ji-eun was asked what HSR2 meant to her, to which she answered "*I wasn't this sad before.*", but it would be a memory she would never forget.

This marked the end of female contestants in HSR2.

3.3.3 High School Rapper 3

Mentor Teams :

- **Team:** Groovyroom (Park Gyu-jeong and Lee Hwi-min)
- **Team:** Hangzoo & Boi B
- **Team:** The Quiett & Code Kunst
- **Team:** Giriboy & Kid Milli

High School Rapper 3 aired on television on February 22, 2019. This season had the same overall format as HSR2. The students on the show were born between 2000 and 2003, meaning that at the time they were sixteen to nineteen years old.

Much like in the previous season, the students were separated into different rooms by their school grades. The first grade shown was 1st grade; the fourth person to walk in was a female rapper, Lee Young-ji from Sinjeong High School, who entered wearing her school uniform, unlike the other rappers in the room. Lee Young-ji looked at the other rappers from the door and confused one of them for rapper Swings, a famous rapper and mentor in season one. Awkwardly, she greeted the others, and when asked her name by one of them, she requested to sit down first. As she sat down, Lee Young-ji tried to confirm that she was in the right room, and one of the other contestants nodded to confirm. Lee Young-ji then explained that when she walked in, she thought they were the mentors because she had never seen the show. Contestant Kang Hyeon-jun told Lee Young-ji she should drop her necktie a bit lower to look more "*Hip Hop*". She hummed at the comment and asked him where he had learned to "*be Hip Hop*"; Kang Hyeon-jun said that he'd learned that from Youtube.

Looking at what they were wearing Lee Young-ji questioned them about why she was the only one wearing a uniform, and male contestant Song Min-jae answered that they had dropped out of school; hearing this, Lee Young-ji asked why they had dropped out. In a confessional, Song Min-jae explained that he dropped out to make music; at first, he thought about changing his studies from mathematics to music, but he preferred to do that at home. Back in the room, Song Min-jae explained that they were studying at home, kind of like homeschooling; upon hearing this, Kang Hyeon-jun said, "*I don't study.*". Confused, Song Min-jae asked why, and Lee Young-ji laughed. Song Min-jae shared that a student shouldn't drop out unless they were sure, to which the other male rapper in the room, Ok Ga-hyang, said that he had dropped out of school right after a school trip; Lee Young-ji laughed once again at their opposing statements. However, Lee Young-ji was confused by the mention of a school trip, because she hadn't been on one yet; this prompted Song Min-jae to say that the problem was that she wasn't "*Hip Hop*" and the other male contestants agreed; with that, Lee Young-ji said, "*It's too hard. I have to learn again.*".

Contestant Ok Ga-hyang talked about his situation: since he wanted to pursue music, he had to live alone in Seoul and mostly eat soybean paste soup; Lee Young-ji was shocked to hear this. Kang Hyeon-jun said that hangover soup was "*Hip Hop*"; Lee Young-ji commented on this by saying that Hip-Hop was a very wide topic, which made Song Min-jae say Hip Hop was hard to understand; Lee Young-ji laughed at Song Min-jae's comment and then apologized; Kang Hyeon-jun said, "*That was really Hip Hop like.*", prompting Lee Young-ji to ask if that was "*Hip Hop*" then they should let her join their crew; both told her not to push it too far. Lee Young-ji asked if they were good at anything other than Hip Hop and Ok Ga-hyang answered that he was good at cooking, surprising the others, who asked him why he didn't mix the soup with the soybean paste. He covered the side of his mouth and said "*I don't have money to buy ingredients.*", Lee Young-ji commented on this by saying he was "*true Hip Hop*".

Another contestant opened the door: Ha Seon-ho from the previous season of HSR, who was now a 1st grader. She greeted the people inside and sat next to Lee Young-ji, who said "*Wow, so pretty*". In a confessional, Ha Seon-ho explained that last year she had written stories about people her age, and from those lyrics, other teenagers gained strength, so this year, on their behalf, she wrote lyrics about things they could not forget.

Lee Young-ji shared with Ha Seon-ho that they were the only ones with uniforms because the others had all dropped out. Hearing this, Ha Seon-ho turned to the male contestants and said "*I think you don't understand the true meaning of Hip Hop*". She added that there was no way to differentiate Hip Hop, the only thing that mattered was whether they knew how to rap. In the same line of thinking, Kang Hyeon-jun questioned Ha Seon-ho if she could rap; she answered she could, so he asked if she thought she was better than him. Unfortunately, Ha Seon-ho shared she'd never heard him rap, so she didn't know; this caused the other contestants to laugh. Once again, in a confessional, Ha Seon-ho said that Kang Hyeon-jun was full of himself, so she wanted to get rid of him.

No other female contestant was shown in the other classes during the presentations; however, one could be seen in the 2nd grade once they were exiting the room.

The first round was the cypher round; unlike the previous season, prep school and first grade didn't have a lot of contestants, so they would perform together, while third grade had double the amount of contestants, so they were divided into two performances.

The first groups to be called on stage were the prep school and first graders. Lee Young-ji was the third person to introduce herself. She shared that people usually told her she had a bright character and should be a comedian; however, she preferred to rap. A duo of contestants sitting on the stands were shown moving their hands, mimicking the steps Young-ji took from side to side during her presentation.

Ha Seon-ho's introduction came right after Lee Young-ji's; she started by saying her name, grade, and school; in a separate room, the two mentor teams from the previous season were shown welcoming her. Ha Seon-ho explained that the previous year she was eliminated in the first team round, and it made her sad that she couldn't show everything she wanted, so she applied again. The show's MC asked her what her goal was this time, and Ha Seon-ho answered that she wanted to reach the finals; since the previous year, she was one of the top female contestants, this time she wanted to be number one amongst everyone. A contestant on the stand asked if she had any rivals on the show; Ha Seon-ho admitted she didn't watch many audition videos, but even if she did, there wouldn't be anyone she wouldn't consider at her level. In a confessional, Lee Young-

ji commented that even if Ha Seon-ho didn't consider her a rival, she wanted Ha Seon-ho to at least pay attention to her rapping skills.

During the cypher, the third beat began as Lee Young-gi grabbed the microphone for "Battle" by Gang Starr. Her voice surprised the contestants and mentors, who were taken aback by how powerful she sounded; despite this, Ha Seon-ho appeared emotionless. At the end of her rap, contestant Kwon Young-hoon commented in a confessional that he had some prejudice towards her, so he didn't expect her to be that good.

Lee Young-gi put the microphone forward for one of the contestants to pick it up. As the next beat began, "Bodak Yellow" by Cardi B, Ha Seon-ho ran over to take the microphone. The other contestants screamed in support of Ha Seon-ho as she performed; they also danced, and at the end, they loudly repeated her last line, "*Come here.*". In the separate room, the mentors commented positively about her performance, saying that her voice and tone were unique and there was no other female rapper like her.

The leader title seemed to be between Lee Young-gi, Ha Seon-ho, and Song Min-jae. Instead of immediately announcing the group's winner, the show's MC announced that he would call out the top two; the first contestant called was Lee Young-gi, and the second was Song Min-jae. Hearing this, Ha Seon-ho said it was sad because she wanted to be the leader. One contestant explained that Ha Seon-ho not being number one was probably because everyone was expecting a lot from her; another contestant said that Lee Young-gi got more support, so it pushed Ha Seon-ho out of the picture. The first place was Lee Young-gi, much to her surprise.

The second grade was called on stage, the female contestant could be seen in the line-up, but she was not introduced or show rapping.

After the rest of the grade performances, the top four team leaders stepped on stage for the team picking, which was done using a tablet with the other contestants' photos and names; each leader picked one member, and after they had all chosen someone, it would be shown on a big screen behind them. Ha Seon-ho was the first pick on Yang Seung-ho's team, a male contestant from the third grade. The other female contestant was not shown being picked but could be seen on Kim Min-gyu's team by the end of the team picking.

The second round was the sixty-second rap round; however, unlike the past season, in which 4 out of the 8 team members survived, this time only 3 contestants from each team would move on to the next round.

In the second episode, forty-one minutes in, Ha Seon-ho was called on stage. As she was stepping on it, mentor Kid Milli turned to Groovyroom and asked them if she was actually good; they both said she was. The show's MC mentioned that the team she was on had a good vibe and asked Ha Seon-ho who she had grown closest to; Ha Seon-ho replied that she had grown closest to the person sitting next to her, Yang Seung-ho, with footage of the two interacting on the stands, with Ha Seon-ho's hand on Yang Seung-ho's leg, her talking to him, and even poking him as he was dozing off. The show's MC asked her why she hadn't gone to an international school since she'd mentioned wanting to the previous year. Ha Seon-ho explained that after that season she spent more time making music than studying and seriously thought about quitting school; however, when she realized that what she liked to do was write lyrics about people her age, she didn't apply for an international school but rather stayed in her previous one. Mentors The Quiett and Code Kunst whispered amongst each other; Code Kunst called her smart, and The Quiett said she seemed different from other female rappers her age.

Throughout Ha Seon-ho's rap, the mentors and other contestants danced and expressed their amazement. After the performance ended, mentor Hangzoo shared that after the previous season ended, he kept observing two rappers, Yoon Byung-ho and Ha Seon-ho, because he liked their rap styles, so he could see she was nervous. Mentor Code Kunst complimented her tone as something people would want to keep hearing. The voting results came out, and Ha Seon-ho got 229 points, placing her in first place for now. In a confessional, Ha Seon-ho said she considered the score overpraised but was thankful nonetheless.

At the end of the performances from Yang Seung-ho's team, the top three were announced, with Ha Seon-ho being placed second, meaning she would move on to the next round.

Near the end of the episode, the unnamed female contestant was shown congratulating one of her team members for their score; in the subtitles, her name is finally shown as Jin Soomin.

The last person from Lee Young-ji's team was Lee Young-ji herself. Mentor The Quiett asked her how long she had been rapping, and Lee Young-ji answered that it had been less than a year, surprising the other contestants. Mentor Kid Milli commented that during the cypher she sounded like The Notorious B.I.G., a famous African American rapper; Lee Young-ji thanked him, saying that was a big compliment; however, Kid Milli corrected himself by saying that didn't mean she was as good as him. Embarrassed, Lee Young-ji didn't know how to answer that, so Kid Milli asked if she planned to rap anything similar to what she did in the first round; Lee Young-ji answered "*Not Biggie, but Young-ji!*".

During her performance, the other contestants seemed surprised by the speed and stability of Lee Young-ji's rap; everyone moved to the beat, even the mentors. As the stage ended, the other contestants applauded, with a few erupting into screams of support. Two rappers on the stands were shown talking about how good her boom-bap skills were. Mentor Boi B was the first mentor to speak, and he said he was surprised that she had only started to rap not too long before, because her fundamentals were strong. Mentor The Quiett gave one of the highest praises possible, saying she was like a "*pearl in the soil*". A few contestants praised her in the stands; however, Jin Soo-min was shown saying "*I'm so jealous*". Lee Young-ji got 205 points, placing her third on the team.

Once all the teams had performed and the top three in each had been selected, they received their team jackets and prepared to decide which mentors they wanted on their team. Yang Seung-ho's team had the second place to choose from, and Lee Young-ji's had the third. Lee Young-ji shared with her team that she wanted to pick The Quiett and Code Kunst; the others agreed, but one of the members wondered if the two mentors even liked them. Yang Seung-ho's team picked Groovyroom, which meant Ha Seon-ho would be with the same mentors two times in a row; Lee Young-ji's team picked The Quiett and Code Kunst.

After all the teams had their mentors, the show's MC announced that the team selection wasn't over yet; there would be four members in each team, and the last member would be picked by the mentors. The twenty eliminated contestants returned to the stage. Lee Young-ji's team picked first, with mentor The Quiett announcing they had picked Kim Min-gyu. Yang Seung-ho's team was second and picked Kim Hyeon-seong; mentor Park Gyu-jeong explained that they picked him because they knew Ha Seon-ho, Yang Seung-ho, and Kim Hyeon-seong were good friends and should stay together. Jin Soo-min was not picked, meaning she was eliminated for good.

Groovyroom took Yang Seung-ho's team to a "*Teenage Experience Day*"; while mentors The Quiett & Code Kunst took Lee Young-ji's team to a restaurant. The second destination of Lee Young-ji's team was an amusement park; the park was empty as they booked it during the night, so they enjoyed a few rides and tried out some costumes. Yang Seung-ho's team was finally shown to have gone to an escape room; Yang Seung-ho, Ha Seon-ho, and Lee Hwi-min were all locked together in the same room. After the escape group, Yang Seung-ho's team gathered in a small room; Groovyroom asked the four contestants what their dreams were; Ha Seon-ho answered that most of her friends and other teenagers didn't have clear dreams of what they wanted; she was no different from them; she was living in repeat, so she didn't know what she wanted yet.

At the end of the episode, the third round was announced; it worked exactly the same way as the previous season. Mentor The Quiett asked Lee Young-ji's team if they had any idea of whom they wanted to group with since the team had to be divided into two; Song Min-jae answered that he had already rapped with the other two male rappers, so if he was to do something "*young and innocent*" with Lee Young-ji, he would better suit that image. The mentors agreed with his assessment and grouped Lee Young-ji with Song Min-jae. Meanwhile, in Yang Seung-ho's team, mentors Groovyroom immediately matched Yang Seung-ho and Oh Dong-hwan, which meant Kim Hyeon-seong and Ha Seon-ho would perform together. Mentor Lee Hwi-min explained that their styles matched really well together.

The last bout of the third round had Lee Young-ji against Ha Seon-ho; this bout was only shown in episode five, so episode four will be skipped.

The two mixed teams stepped on stage: Lee Young-ji and Song Min-jae against Kim Hyeon-seong and Ha Seon-ho. The two teams' rap was based on books. In a backstage recording, Kim Hyeon-seong admitted he wanted to go against Lee Young-ji; Ha Seon-ho agreed, saying it would be fun for the two mixed teams to face each other.

Lee Young-ji and Song Min-jae were the first to take the stage, and they announced on stage that they had chosen *My Sweet Orange Tree* by José Mauro de Vasconcelos, a novel about the difficulties of growing up. It then cut to a team discussion where mentor Code Kunst joked about the novel's theme by questioning what was the height of the two contestants; Song Min-jae explained that what they wanted to discuss was their growth into adulthood, with Lee Young-ji adding that it should be something thought-provoking for teenagers. Seo Min-jae shared that they were the youngest duo, so they should show a younger vibe.

The two contestants met up at Seo Min-jae's studio but left soon after to interview three famous teenagers. While interviewing, Lee Young-ji shared that a lot of people looked down on her, and the people close to her were concerned about her decision to rap professionally.

The show cut back to the team discussion where the mentors reviewed the lyrics of the two rappers; in the case of Lee Young-ji, she explained that she had thought of a lot of things, but as she was writing them down, the back of her cell phone broke; surprised, The Quiett questioned if that is why she mentions it in the lyrics; when Lee Young-ji confirmed this, they all laughed.

In the rehearsal, all mentors seemed to enjoy the performance, with mentor Boi B even commenting to mentor The Quiett that Young-ji was really good. Mentor The Quiett shared in a confessional that even though Lee Young-ji had not been rapping for long, she had a special charisma and was very reliable.

The performance started, and Lee Young-ji turned to Seo Min-jae and told him not to be nervous because it would be all right. Song Min-jae did singing rap, while Lee Young-ji did a more powerful rap verse. The two team mentors, The Quiett and Code Kunst, reacted to the performance in a confessional, with mentor The Quiett saying "There was a punchline" by questioning why they should grow up; meanwhile, mentor Code Kunst said that out of all the lyrics performed in this round, these fit the thoughts of teenagers the best.

Next up were Kim Hyeon-seong and Ha Seon-ho. Kim Hyeon-seong shared that they had picked the novel "The Metamorphosis" by Franz Kafka, and Ha Seon-ho explained they would be trying to break down stereotypes people have. The show cut to the team meeting up with two special guests: HSR1 mentor Jessi and SMTM8 contestant Woodie Gochild. The two guests asked the team to perform in front of them. Ha Seon-ho was the second, and as she got on the small stage, Jessi imitated her awkward hair flip. As Ha Seon-ho rapped, there was a clear lack of eye contact and a lot of hair fixing. After she ended, Jessi immediately warned her to stop touching her hair because she looked uncomfortable. Woodie Gochild explained that she needed to have confidence in her music and enjoy it more. Jessi asked Ha Seon-ho if it was her first time on HSR; Ha Seon-ho answered that it was her second time, so Jessi said that meant she had to win.

On stage, their performance began with the crowd's support as the beat played "*Groovy Everywhere*", Groovyroom's tagline. The song was much more powerful and heavy than Lee Young-ji and Seo Min-jae's; the crowd moved to the rhythm and, as it ended, screamed in support of the two.

After the performance ended, both teams stood on stage. Then the comments for Kim Hyeon-seong and Ha Seon-ho's song were given, and mentor Giriboy started by saying that the beat was amazing and questioning Groovyroom why they had not given it to him; aside from the beat, Giriboy also commented that the performance itself and the atmosphere were amazing. The votes appeared on the screen behind the contestants, and much to Lee Young-ji's shock, she and Seo Min-jae won; Ha Seon-ho approached Lee Young-ji and whispered to her "*You deserve the win, good job.*".

Team Groovyroom had to pick between eliminating Ha Seon-ho or Kim Hyeon-seong; they picked to eliminate Kim Hyeon-seong, with their reasoning being that while he was talented, he had less stage experience than Ha Seon-ho.

The fourth round was the second team round. Since there was one team with four members, two teams with three members, and one team with only two members, the team with four members was divided into two groups like in the previous round, the teams with three

members had one group and one solo performance, and lastly, the team with only two members had two solo performances. Unlike the previous round, this time the teams were judged first by special guests and then by the audience; only the top six performances out of the eight would make it to the semi-finals. Team Groovyroom decided to change their groups and paired Lee Young-ji with Kim Min-gyu. Ha Seon-ho was on the team with only two members left, which meant she was automatically going to have a solo performance.

The first performance in episode six was Ha Seon-ho's. The show's MC asked Ha Seon-ho who her biggest rival was as she stepped on stage with both mentors; mentor Lee Hwi-min answered for her that everyone was a rival; however, the show's MC told him not to answer for her and let her speak; Ha Seon-ho said that Lee Hwi-min had told her that competition was not important; what was important was to show it all.

One of the guests asked Ha Seon-ho if she had prepared anything special, which led to a previously recorded scene of Ha Seon-ho talking with her mentors. In this scene, mentor Park Gyu-jeong asked Ha Seon-ho what she would like to discuss in her next rap. Ha Seon-ho answered that there were a lot of negative comments after she appeared on television, so she wanted to make a song that would comfort her and make her see that it's ok and she's fine.

The song's name was "I'm Fine" and the performance featured well-known K-R&B rapper pH-1. The song was relaxed but still very lively, and Ha Seon-ho rapped without any mistakes throughout. The performance was well received by the crowd, which shouted loudly as it ended.

At the end of the performance, Ha Seon-ho seemed to break down in tears as she covered her face but quickly recomposed herself. Giant Pink, the winner of Unpretty Rapstar 3, commented in a confessional that Ha Seon-ho must have been under a lot of pressure, as evidenced by the look in her eyes. Special guest Killagramz, a contestant on SMTM5 and SMTM6, shared that Ha Seon-ho was sick that day and it could be noticed as she rapped. Mentor Giriboy commented that the song was great and that if it was released, he would gladly listen to it. Ha Seon-ho's special guest score was 141, the lowest so far; the disappointment on Ha Seon-ho's face could be seen for a split second before it cut to someone else.

As Ha Seon-ho left the stage, Giant Pink shared in a confessional that she too had received a lot of bad comments and it was hard to get her head around it, but she hoped Ha Seon-ho could do it. Mentor Park Gyu-jeong shared that she should keep her head high and keep working hard to achieve her dreams.

The last group to perform in the fourth round was Lee Young-ji and Kim Min-gyu. The show MC commented that their group was really famous, and as one of the special guests tried to talk with Lee Young-ji, the crowd began screaming her name; he then asked her if she knew how popular she had become and whether people around her knew. Lee Young-ji shared that the principal at her school told her to keep her voice well rested, ignoring the first question.

The team was shown in mentor Code Kunst's studio, where he shared the beat he had made for Lee Young-ji and Kim Min-gyu; they all loved the beat. After, it showed a scene of Code Kunst meeting up with the two in a smaller studio, where they ate together. Code Kunst explained that in the last round, they had found out what people wanted to listen to, but this time they had to give it their all and be confident with the beat. Lee Young-ji and Kim Min-gyu were shown preparing the movements for the performance; during the rehearsal, their featured artist could be heard but was not shown.

The song was called "G.O (Get Out)"; it had high energy and fast raps, mainly from Lee Young-ji. As the featured artist, Kim Hyo-eun, a contestant in SMTM3/5/777, entered, the two rappers and the crowd jumped along to his rap. At the end, the crowd applauded the performance, and someone could be heard shouting "*Cokun did some Cokun!*", in reference to the beat by Code Kunst. The special guests all praised the performance, and the two received 189 votes out of 200.

The show's MC called forward the four teams with the most votes; Lee Young-ji and Kim Min-gyu were in second place, with the added votes from the audience. Ha Seon-ho was in the bottom four, and her score was the last to be announced; when it was announced, Ha Seon-ho got the last rank, meaning she was eliminated. Ha Seon-ho apologized to Groovyroom but was very glad to have participated in HSR a second time. Mentor Lee Hwi-min said that Groovyroom would look forward to her career and would assist her with anything she needed.

Episode seven was the semi-finals, where the nine remaining artists performed solo stages, the audience voted during the performance, and twenty seconds before it ended, the votes were hidden. Only five contestants moved on to the finals; the first five performers sat in the "Final Zone", and if anyone that performed after them surpassed their votes, they would leave their seat and be eliminated from the show.

Lee Young-ji was announced on stage as the only woman to make it to the semi-finals; the crowd cheered loudly as she appeared. The show's MC asked her if she had learned anything about Hip Hop throughout this competition, and Lee Young-ji brought back a comment Kang Hyeon-jun had made during their first meeting, in which he said, "*Hip Hop is like Hangover Soup*". She also shared that throughout the season she had enjoyed Kang Hyeon-jun's rap; hearing this, Kang Hyeon-jun was embarrassed as he sat next to his team in their dressing room.

Lee Young-ji explained that her song was called "Go With Me", because she wanted to make a song that made others feel good. In a pre-recorded meeting with her mentors, Code Kunst shared that this time he'd made a beat that was fun and cheerful to contrast her more mature voice. Lee Young-ji picked rapper Coogie as her featured artist, because she wanted someone who would jump with her on stage and happily share that energy with the audience.

During the performance, mentor Giriboy commented that it was a bit chaotic; however, he also said she was talented. As Coogie entered, the two indeed jumped, as did the crowd. As the performance ended, the other mentors were surprised by how much she had improved in the short time she had been on the show.

The show's MC praised Coogie for his hard work; Coogie explained he was on the show as a special guest in a previous round, and he really wanted to perform with Lee Young-ji. Because she was the third to perform, Lee Young-ji sat in the final area, and unless someone had more votes than her, she would remain there and pass to the final round; the votes of the people in the final area were not shared.

Lee Young-ji remained one of the contestants in the "Final Zone" until the end. At the end of the episode, a mistake seemed to have occurred during the voting for one of the contestants, which would see him eliminated; however, due to the fact that it was not his fault and calculating that his score would be higher, the final would have six people instead of five.

The finals functioned similarly to the semi-finals; however, there was no special zone to determine the winner; instead, after the performance, the votes were announced; however, the audience would have extra time at the end of all performances to vote on their favorite contestants, resulting in two scores added to determine the winner.

Halfway through episode eight, Lee Young-ji was called on stage for her final performance. The crowd screamed with "*overwhelming*" support. The show's MC shared that she was one performance away from becoming the first female winner and questioned whether she was ready or not; Lee Young-ji answered she was; after all, she'd come to win.

The show cut to seven days before the finals, as Lee Young-ji met up with mentors The Quiett and Code Kunst at AOMG's office, the record label Code Kunst worked for. Mentor The Quiett mentioned that while she was a beginner, she had made it to the end and had learned from the competition; Lee Young-ji agreed, sharing that she'd learned that performing naturally and calmly so as to not make the viewers uncomfortable was important.

Mentor The Quiett asked Lee Young-ji what message she wanted to send in the final song. Lee Young-ji shared that she was very thankful to them (the mentors), to which Code Kunst jokingly agreed; she added that they had trusted her and helped her gain confidence; however, her friends had also been by her side during this journey.

In a later recording, during the practice meeting, the mentors showed Lee Young-ji her featuring artist, Woo Wonjae, who was one of the top three in SMTM6 and had featured on the final song of the previous year's top three contestant, Lee Byung-jae. During the final rehearsal, Lee Young-ji was embarrassed at the fan interaction lines, which made Code Kunst joke that she was good at pretending since she had done the same to the previous featuring artist. The two mentors were shown in a confessional sharing that, right when they thought about whether they had enough to win or not, they received a message. In the soundcheck, on the day of the performance, a figure could be seen entering with "*confident steps*". That figure would be none other than Changmo, a well-known Korean rapper.

The performance began, and the votes skyrocketed before Lee Young-ji had even begun to rap; she already had 200 votes. Lee Young-ji had a fast verse to match the beat; Woo Wonjae entered after the second hook, with Changmo entering to rap the last hook. In the crowd, Lee Young-ji's friends and family could be seen. After the performance ended, Lee Young-ji looked over at them and was nearly overcome with emotion.

The crowd loudly chanted Lee Young-ji's name. In different confessionals, the other team's mentors praised Lee Young-ji, saying that so far she had not made a single mistake, so she deserved all the applause. On stage, mentor Code Kunst shared that Lee Young-ji had barely slept for the past ten days, so he was happy to see her get rewarded for it. The first round of voting appeared on the screen as 456; the highest so far.

After all the performances and extra voting, the show began to announce the contestants from sixth to first place. As it got to the final two, with Lee Young-ji as one of them, the show's MC asked mentor The Quiett what he thought the result would be; The Quiett answered that it didn't matter because, in his and Code Kunst's hearts, there was already a winner.

Lee Young-ji was announced as the winner through a large screen behind her, and the other contestants stepped back on stage to congratulate her as she hid her face. When the camera zoomed back into her, Lee Young-ji was visibly crying but still somewhat composed; however, she was unable to say anything more than a "*Thank you*". The show's MC asked Lee Young-ji if there was anything she would like to say to her mentors; putting her microphone back up, Lee Young-ji thanked them for believing in her, giving her good beats, and mentoring her.

Mentor The Quiett gave his final words by sharing that, although unexpected, Lee Young-ji had incredible development and a great mindset, so he congratulated her.

The show's MC announced the show's ending and thanked everyone who participated, even the fans who supported the show.

In a final confession, Lee Young-ji shared that she couldn't believe she had won. She was happy she could show everyone what she could do; she was really happy to have performed well, and in many ways, HSR3 was an "*unforgettable experience and memory*".

3.3.4 High School Rapper 4

Mentor Teams :

- **Team:** Simon Dominic & Loco
- **Team:** The Quiett & Yumdda
- **Team:** Jay Park & Woogie & pH-1
- **Team:** Changmo & Way Ched

High School Rapper 4 aired on television on February 19, 2021. This was the first season post COVID-19, much like the previous two seasons the contestants were pre-screened through online auditions and only forty made it onto the show.

It is controversially lacking female rappers, with not a single one having been chosen to be on the series. As said by show producer Choi Hyo-jin "The producers thoroughly examined everyone, but we could not choose a [female] contestant to join us. We hope to see more talented and powerful female rappers next year." ([Yoon, 2021](#)).

3.4 Conclusions

The three investigated rap competitions, similar to typical TV shows, employ the use of storylines to enhance their appeal. The presence of these storylines is crucial as it allows the audience to develop a deeper connection with the contestants. Introducing contestants right from the start is essential for the series to adequately develop their stories and ensure audience engagement. Both *Show Me the Money* and *High School Rapper* initially presented themselves as

large open audition competitions, providing a platform for aspiring individuals to be discovered and nurture their stories throughout the season. However, it is worth noting that *High School Rapper* switched to predetermined contestants in its second season.

These competition series aimed to create an atmosphere where it seemed like every participant had an equal opportunity to succeed. Unfortunately, over the years, both contestants and producers have come forward and shared concerns about potential rigging to some extent ([Khan-George, 2022](#)). These revelations have raised questions about the fairness and authenticity of the competition process and the narratives presented.

The presence of storylines brings potential issues surrounding the competitions' transparency and can impact the viewers' perception of the contestants and the overall show. The audience's ability to connect with the participants on a more profound level can be influenced by their understanding of the authenticity and integrity of the competition. Despite these concerns, the utilization of storylines in these rap competitions remains a significant element of their success. Storytelling helps create engaging narratives that resonate with the audience, generating emotional investment and providing a compelling viewing experience.

Taking into consideration the possibility of rigging, an analysis of the series breakdowns reveals a discernible pattern in the selection of female contestants. In *Show Me the Money*, it becomes apparent that the female contestants who receive more screen time and focus were often already signed to a company or had connections with other rappers who participated in previous seasons. This pattern is particularly noticeable from SMTM8 to SMTM11, which suggested a potential bias towards established or connected individuals. In the first season of *High School Rapper*, when open auditions were held, it was challenging to determine whether there was any rigging involved in selecting which contestants to introduce.

Unlike *Show Me the Money* and the first season of *High School Rapper*, the remaining seasons of *High School Rapper* and all of *Unpretty Rapstar* do not appear to suffer from this type of rigging due to both shows featuring predetermined contestants, eliminating the possibility of judge biases. However, it is worth noting that in the case of *Unpretty Rapstar*, a majority of the contestants were somewhat established or had already signed with a company, indicating a preference for participants with existing connections or recognition.

Although the presence of rigging in the selection process, particularly based on previous connections, may initially appear negative, it is challenging to ascertain whether this type of rigging is more detrimental towards women, as men also experienced its effects in these series. Nonetheless, it is important to note that while male rappers were more commonly seen joining the show without an established career or connections and subsequently leaving with newfound

opportunities, this observation can be partially attributed to the higher number of male participants.

It is crucial to consider the broader context of these series, including the gender dynamics within the rap industry and the overall representation of male and female rappers. The higher number of male rappers participating in these shows may contribute to the observed discrepancy in the level of pre-existing connections.

In the context of rigging, *Show Me the Money 3* holds particular significance as it marked the true beginning of these rap competitions. One notable instance that highlights the impact of connections and affiliations is the introduction of Yuk Ji-dam. Her inclusion on the show generated excitement due to the fact she was just a high school student but had a good voice and immense stage confidence. It was emphasized that she had no prior career or contract, seemingly suggesting a fair opportunity for her to participate; however, she was later revealed to be a student of Heo In-chang, a contestant from SMTM2, which goes to show that she wasn't totally outside of the Korean Hip-Hop scene to begin with.

This exemplifies the intricate dynamics at play in contestant selection, where underlying connections and associations can influence the opportunities provided to aspiring artists. While Yuk Ji-dam's talent and potential were undoubtedly significant factors in her inclusion, the connection to a previous contestant demonstrates the potential impact of pre-existing relationships on the show's narrative and casting decisions.

Yuk Ji-dam's journey in SMTM3 included her advancement to the team round, which at the time was a notable accomplishment; however, she was not the only woman to reach that stage of the competition. Another female rapper, Toy, also made it to the team round alongside her; but Toy's presence and participation were largely overlooked and subsequently forgotten, not only in the following seasons of *Show Me the Money* but also in other related series.

Toy holds a significant distinction as the first female rapper of African descent to participate in *Show Me the Money*. Despite this milestone, her visibility and portrayal on the show were minimal, with limited screen time and recognition. It was only during the later stages of her journey, particularly as she faced potential elimination, that Toy received slightly more attention.

Regrettably, both Yuk Ji-dam and Toy were ultimately eliminated in the sixth round, which marked the first live performances of the competition. This outcome highlighted the challenges and obstacles faced by women in rap competitions, where their journeys often come to an end relatively early in the competition.

The underrepresentation and lack of recognition faced by Toy raise important questions about inclusivity, diversity, and equal opportunities for female rappers, especially those from marginalized backgrounds. Her participation, though brief and relatively unnoticed, holds significance in breaking barriers and challenging the prevailing norms within the South Korean rap industry and the culture itself.

Unfortunately for Yuk Ji-dam, her appearance on SMTM3 was met with negative reception from viewers, which led to online criticism and bullying. In the eyes of some commenters, her perceived lack of experience and the mistakes she made during the competition became the main points of contention. Additionally, there were accusations of favoritism towards her for being a female contestant.

Yuk Ji-dam's experience on the show can be viewed by some as an example of tokenism, especially the continued mentions on subsequent seasons of the show, specifically when female contestants appeared. This is of course implying that her presence was used as a symbol or representation of female participation rather than being based solely on her talent or abilities as a rapper, and subsequently placed expectations on other female participants to be like ideal image the show placed on Yuk Ji-dam.

The following years, Yuk Ji-dam decided to participate in *Unpretty Rapstar 1* and *Unpretty Rapstar 3* which proved to be a significant mistake for her career. In her personal blog, she candidly revealed the challenges she faced after signing with CJ E&M, the company behind the show. Despite being promised an album and support, she felt that the reality was far from what was initially discussed.

Yuk Ji-dam expressed her disappointment with the lack of support and managerial assistance from the company. In contrast, she observed that contestants who signed for *Unpretty Rapstar 2* were provided with two managers each. The promised album never materialized for Yuk Ji-dam, even after her second appearance on *Unpretty Rapstar 3*.

Tragically, her participation in *Unpretty Rapstar 3* marked a turning point in her career. She was portrayed as the "villain" of the season, which had a detrimental impact on her public image. Yuk Ji-dam later confirmed that a director of the show had explicitly informed her that she had been deliberately edited in a malicious manner, further contributing to the negative perception of her character ([Kim D., 2018](#)).

These experiences shed light on the challenges faced by Yuk Ji-dam within the industry and the significant impact that editing and narrative manipulation can have on an artist's career trajectory. It serves as a reminder of the importance of ethical and responsible production practices

in reality TV shows, ensuring that contestants are treated fairly, and their stories are portrayed accurately.

The last notable public appearance of Yuk Ji-dam was in Show Me the Money 10, which aired in 2021. She attempted to participate as a contestant in the season but unfortunately did not pass the first round of the competition. It is worth noting that her inclusion in this particular season can be seen as part of the show's efforts to commemorate its 10-year anniversary. It can also be interpreted as a nod to her previous appearances on the show and her significance in the history of the series as one of the notable female contestants from earlier seasons.

This unfortunate story of Yuk Ji-dam, one of Show Me the Money's most recognizable female rappers, highlights the darker side of rigging in these shows and its detrimental impact. Despite the promise of a solo album and support from the series' company, Yuk Ji-dam's career went on a downward spiral with every participation. The negative portrayal of her on the shows, coupled with the lack of support from the company, ultimately led to the end of her career in both television and music.

Yuk Ji-dam's experience serves as a stark reminder that the rigging and manipulation within these shows can have long-lasting and devastating effects on the participants. The broken promises and lack of opportunities she faced, despite her talent and potential, showcase the negative consequences that can arise when contestants are not given fair and equal treatment.

In SMTM4, a concerning incident unfolded before the public's eyes involving Blacknut and Ahn Soo-min. During a performance together, Blacknut's behavior raised alarms as he continuously approached Ahn Soo-min, making her visibly uncomfortable. He aggressively insisted on obtaining her phone number, despite her clear distress. This incident shed light on the problematic dynamic of how women are often objectified and desired, even when they explicitly express their discomfort or lack of interest.

The judges and the show itself should have taken immediate and decisive action to reprimand Blacknut for his inappropriate behavior. First and foremost, the judges should have intervened during the performance, recognizing the distress and discomfort of Ahn Soo-min; then they should have firmly addressed Blacknut's actions, emphasizing the importance of consent and respect for personal boundaries. By doing so, they would have sent a strong message to both the contestants and the audience that such behavior is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

By addressing the incident promptly, firmly, and transparently, the show could have set a precedent for handling such situations in the future. It would have demonstrated a commitment to creating a safe and respectful environment for all participants, regardless of their gender. Such

actions would have contributed to dismantling the pervasive culture of objectification and promoting a more inclusive and supportive space within the rap competition.

If the incident between Blacknut and Ahn Soo-min was perceived as a harmless or comedic interaction within South Korean society, it highlights the need for ongoing dialogue and education regarding respectful behavior, consent, and personal boundaries. While societal views may play a role in shaping perceptions, it is crucial to foster an environment that values the dignity and well-being of all individuals, regardless of gender. But instead of that, Blacknut's behavior went by without clear repercussions, while Ahn Soo-min was eliminated from the competition.

From SMTM3 to SMTM5, most of the women did not make it through to the fourth round; however, there was something important about the contestants that participated in these seasons. Out of the eighteen women shown and named from SMTM3 to SMTM5, only ten were actively a part of the “storyline”, and given more than a few seconds, those ten women would all go on to participate in *Unpretty Rapstar*.

Several of the female artists on *Unpretty Rapstar* ended up having underwhelming careers; with artists like Lil Cham, Tymee, Jace, Ha Joo-yeon, and Kool Kid's even removing themselves from the media and entertainment industry as a whole. While it is true that these artists faced challenges following their participation, it is essential to examine various factors that contributed to their outcomes.

One possible perspective is that *Unpretty Rapstar*, despite its intentions to promote female rappers, may have inadvertently hindered the contestants' progress in the industry. The competitive nature of the show and the pressure to stand out among talented participants created a high-stakes environment that did not allow them to showcase their full potential. Added onto that was the editing choices and controversially negative portrayal of contestants which also heavily influenced public perception, overshadowing an artist's talent.

Some participants may have faced personal challenges or made choices that impacted their career paths after the show. While *Unpretty Rapstar*'s influence on the careers of these artists cannot be discounted, it is important to also recognize the complexities of the situation. The show's impact must be considered alongside other industry dynamics, individual choices, and external factors that shape an artist's journey. Ultimately, the long-term success and sustainability of an artist's career depend on various factors beyond their participation in a reality show, and it is crucial to acknowledge the multifaceted nature of these circumstances.

Unlike *Show Me the Money* and even the later released *High School Rapper*, *Unpretty Rapstar* failed to understand its audience and prioritize creating an entertaining series. Instead, it

seemed to prioritize living up to its name by fostering a negative atmosphere that often led to conflicts and tensions among the contestants. This approach did not resonate well with viewers and hindered the show's ability to connect with its intended audience.

A notable instance highlighting the show's problematic atmosphere occurred in *Unpretty Rapstar 3*. During an interim check, two rappers were put at risk of elimination based on a vote by the contestants themselves. To the surprise of everyone, the two rappers were immediately excluded from the dining table before dinner had even been served. This abrupt exclusion shocked the remaining contestants, who voiced their strong disapproval of the decision. They felt that it was unnecessary and cruel to exclude their fellow contestants in such a manner, especially during what should have been a pleasant and communal moment.

This incident highlighted a lack of empathy and consideration for the contestants' well-being, as well as a questionable approach in creating compelling and engaging television. Instead of fostering a supportive and collaborative environment that could bring out the best in the contestants, *Unpretty Rapstar* often seemed to emphasize drama and conflict, which ultimately hindered the show's ability to showcase the talents and potential of its participants.

Creating a healthy and positive competitive environment can be a delicate balance, and unfortunately, every season of *Unpretty Rapstar* fell short in this regard. The show's approach to creating entertainment seemed to prioritize sensationalism and controversy over nurturing the growth and success of the contestants. As a result, the negative atmosphere and questionable decisions made on the show contributed to a disconnect with the audience and may have ultimately contributed to its shortcomings in terms of audience reception and impact on the contestants' careers.

High School Rapper, which debuted a year after the last season of *Unpretty Rapstar*, introduced a different approach to the rap competition genre. Initially following the footsteps of *Show Me the Money* with open auditions for high school students, *High School Rapper* later shifted its strategy to include pre-selected rappers starting from the second season. This change in format had implications for the representation of female rappers in the show.

The first season of *High School Rapper* allocated more time and focus on the audition process, allowing for a greater number of female rappers to be featured. In fact, it boasted the highest number of female rappers in any audition round, surpassing even *Show Me the Money* in terms of female representation.

The inclusion of a significant number of female rappers at the start of the first season of *High School Rapper* provided a refreshing change and showcased the talents of aspiring young women

in the rap scene. By providing them with ample opportunity to showcase their skills, the show demonstrated a commitment to fostering diversity and inclusivity within the genre. This emphasis on representation and talent discovery contributed to the show's appeal and garnered attention from viewers who were eager to see aspiring female rappers make their mark on the stage.

Compared to the other two shows, *Show Me the Money* and *Unpretty Rapstar*, *High School Rapper* embraced a more youthful and family-friendly approach. It aimed to create an environment suitable for the younger age group of its contestants, resulting in a show that can be considered the "kids version" of South Koreans rap competitions. This approach meant that there was no profanity or explicit content allowed, maintaining a clean and appropriate atmosphere throughout the show.

The emphasis on maintaining a wholesome atmosphere in *High School Rapper* was beneficial for all contestants, including the female participants. Unlike other shows where appearances can be subjected to harsh judgment, the focus in *High School Rapper* was primarily on talent, skill, and creativity. The contestants, including the female rappers, were not subjected to intense scrutiny regarding their physical appearance.

In the first and second seasons of *High School Rapper*, many contestants wore school uniforms, which further contributed to an equalized and modest visual presentation. Additionally, the contestants often opted for moderate or minimal makeup, allowing their natural features to take prominence over heavy cosmetic enhancements. By minimizing the emphasis on external appearance, the show encouraged participants, irrespective of gender, to showcase their rap skills and artistic abilities without undue pressure or criticism.

The "kids version" approach of *High School Rapper* created a nurturing and supportive environment for all contestants, fostering their growth as young artists. It also allowed the female participants to showcase their talents on an equal footing with their male counterparts, devoid of unnecessary judgment or objectification.

Unfortunately, despite the presence of a significant number of female rappers at the beginning of both the first and second seasons of *High School Rapper*, their journey on the show was cut short. It is disheartening to note that in both seasons, the last two remaining female rappers were eliminated in the third round, marking the midway point of the competition.

While there was a promising start with a diverse group of female contestants, only a few managed to advance past the second round. Out of those who made it to the third round, only two female rappers, namely Lee Ji-eun and Ha Seon-ho, were able to secure a meaningful amount of screen time and showcase their skills.

The early elimination of female rappers in HSR is indeed unfortunate and raises questions about the opportunities and representation provided to them on the show. Despite their talent and potential, it seems that the challenges faced by female contestants in sustaining their presence and progressing further in the competition were greater compared to their male counterparts.

However, it is important to acknowledge the accomplishments of Lee Ji-eun and Ha Seon-ho, who managed to break through the barriers and leave a lasting impact with their performances. Their presence and contributions added valuable diversity and representation to the show, inspiring other aspiring female rappers and leaving a mark on the audience.

Lee Ji-eun's debut in *High School Rapper 1* showcased her remarkable talent, drawing comparisons to established female rappers such as Yuk Ji-dam and Kisum. Unlike some other contestants, Lee Ji-eun did not have any pre-existing connections or contracts in the industry, indicating that her entry into the show was solely based on her raw talent and skills. Her powerful and confident rap performances left a lasting impression on both the judges and the audience.

In the subsequent season of *High School Rapper*, Lee Ji-eun returned to the competition, this time alongside Ha Seon-ho. However, due to being in different teams, their interactions on the show were limited. Ha Seon-ho had previously participated in SMTM6 but received minimal screen time, fortunately this time around she had a better opportunity to showcase her talents and persona in HSR2; this time she was portrayed as a socially conscious teenager with a desire to make a positive impact on others her age, adding depth and purpose to her performances.

The first significant interaction between Ha Seon-ho and Lee Ji-eun occurred during the third round of the competition, prompted by Ha Seon-ho's song motif, which called for discussions about personal aspirations, so the two contestants had a chance to engage with each other. This moment allowed Lee Ji-eun to express her desires and dreams, revealing their aspirations and vulnerabilities.

Despite their evident talent and potential, both Ha Seon-ho and Lee Ji-eun were eliminated in the third round of *High School Rapper*. Shockingly, they received disappointing low scores in comparison to their opponents, leading to their exit from the competition.

Ha Seon-ho's journey continued in HSR3, where she brought a similar persona but with an added touch of confidence and cockiness. The show initially tried to depict Ha Seon-ho and the newcomer Lee Young-ji as rivals, potentially setting up a dynamic storyline. These two ended up receiving significant screen time and were presented as the main female contenders in HSR3.

As the competition progressed, the supposed rivalry between Ha Seon-ho and Lee Young-ji became virtually non-existent. This was primarily due to the structure of the show, which emphasized interactions and collaborations among contestants from the same teams. Since Ha Seon-ho and Lee Young-ji were not part of the same team, their interactions were limited, and the set up rivalry faded away.

Even when they faced each other in the third round, during the two-on-two "*textbook round*", Ha Seon-ho and Lee Young-ji primarily focused on their individual performances rather than engaging in direct competition or rivalry; their emphasis remained on showcasing their own skills and talents rather than engaging in confrontational interactions.

The shift in focus from rivalry to individual performances can be attributed to the nature of the competition and the contestants' desire to give their best on stage. While the initial portrayal of Ha Seon-ho and Lee Young-ji as rivals may have intrigued viewers, the dynamics within the show and the contestants' priorities ultimately led to a more individualistic approach.

Lee Young-ji's introduction in HSR3 made an immediate impact on both the participants and the viewers. Her relatable personality, sense of humor, and most importantly, her undeniable talent captivated the audience ([Woobin, 2022b](#)). With a unique low-tone voice, exceptional diction, impressive vocal skills, and insightful lyrics, Lee Young-ji stood out as a remarkable artist.

Although her eventual victory in HSR3 came as somewhat surprising, it wasn't entirely unexpected given her exceptional abilities. Lee Young-ji's win was significant in many ways, as she achieved what no other woman had done before or even come close to accomplishing at that time. At the time, even in *Show Me the Money*, a series with a longer history and greater exposure, no woman had managed to surpass the top 16 stage.

Lee Young-ji's triumph in HSR3 shattered barriers and set a new precedent for female rappers in the Korean hip-hop scene. Her success showcased the incredible talent and potential of women in the genre and paved the way for future female contestants to strive for similar achievements.

After the groundbreaking success of Lee Young-ji's win in HSR3, there was a heightened expectation that subsequent seasons would feature more female rappers and provide them with greater opportunities; in spite of that, the reality turned out to be quite the opposite. *High School Rapper 4* completely lacked female contestants and mentors, with the only female presence being the artists featured in song collaborations.

Choi Hyu-jin, the show producer, offered an explanation for this glaring gender imbalance. Despite receiving a staggering twelve thousand student applications, they claimed that they were unable to select a female contestant to "join them" (Yoon, 2021). This explanation suggested that although there were indeed women who applied, but the show deliberately chose to prioritize male rappers.

Instead of seizing the opportunity to foster diversity and promote female talent, HSR4 opted to focus on recruiting established male high school rappers. This choice further emphasized the underrepresentation of women in the competition and missed an important chance to empower and uplift aspiring female artists.

While *Unpretty Rapstar* and *High School Rapper* were airing, *Show Me the Money* continued to be a popular show. During the time *Unpretty Rapstar* was on television, there were scarce opportunities for female rappers to successfully participate in *Show Me the Money*. It wasn't until 2017, after *Unpretty Rapstar* was canceled, that SMTM6 featured its first female rapper to make it to the top 16, Asol. Unfortunately, her journey on the show was overshadowed by the narrative surrounding the person she had defeated in the second round, Penomeco, an already established male rapper.

Throughout her time on SMTM, the focus often shifted to the decision of choosing Asol over Penomeco. The show constantly emphasized that she needed to prove herself since she had been chosen over him. This narrative overshadowed Asol's individuality and accomplishments, diminishing her own story and potential. Asol's elimination from the competition was seen as somewhat unfair and unexpected. She was pitted against a younger contestant in the diss battle, and despite following the instructions to be "soft", the producers claimed she didn't meet their expectations. In contrast, another contestant on her team, Maniac, who struggled with rapping in Korean, a crucial aspect of participation in these shows, was saved from elimination.

After Lee Young-ji's win, *Show Me the Money* finally saw an increase in the number of female contestants who made it far into the competition. The season following *High School Rapper 3* was *Show Me the Money 8*, which was released just a few months later. This season featured several female rappers who played a significant role in shaping the season's narrative.

Show Me the Money 8 began by introducing two female rappers back-to-back, Swervy and Yunhway. In the first round, Swervy, who was signed with Hi-Lite Records, a Hip-Hop label under CJ E&M, unfortunately failed after rapping for just two seconds. Immediately after, Yunhway, who was under Wedaplugg Records owned by Swings and Giriboy, both of whom were producers in SMTM8, took the stage; despite forgetting part of her lyrics, Yunhway managed to pass the round.

The same pattern repeated in the second round. Swervy passed a second audition but once again failed to pass in the second round, even though she didn't make any mistakes in her performance. Conversely, Yunhway, despite forgetting her lyrics, successfully passed the second round. Throughout these moments, Swervy was visibly shocked by Yunhway's progression but chose not to voice her concerns.

This dynamic between Swervy and Yunhway highlighted the contrasting journeys of the two female rappers in the competition. Swervy's repeated failures despite seemingly flawless performances could raise questions about the fairness of the judging process. On the other hand, Yunhway's ability to advance despite making mistakes brings attention to the subjective nature of the evaluations. The show's editing choices and portrayal of these moments further emphasized the disparity between the two contestants.

The rest of Yunhway's journey on the show remained somewhat controversial, as she continued to advance through the rounds despite making continuous mistakes. Unlike her, another female rapper named Bryn, who was initially introduced as a cute rapper, gradually gained more attention as the competition progressed.

In the early rounds, Bryn seemed to blend into the background, receiving less screen time and recognition, however, around the sixth round, she resurfaced as the only other female rapper alongside Yunhway to make it that far in the competition. Interestingly, it was revealed that Yunhway and Bryn already knew each other and appeared to be good friends. Their camaraderie and bond were evident in their interactions throughout the show, including their conversations and comforting hugs, which showcased a supportive dynamic between the two artists.

Bryn's unexpected resurgence and her friendship with Yunhway brought a fresh dynamic to the competition, highlighting the importance of female solidarity and support within the male-dominated rap industry. Their presence and friendship challenged stereotypes and demonstrated that women could excel in Hip-Hop while maintaining genuine connections with their fellow artists. This added depth to their individual journeys and contributed to a more diverse and inclusive representation of female rappers.

Bryn stood out as one of the show's "nice and cute" rappers, maintaining a positive and respectful attitude towards her opponents throughout the competition. From the beginning until the end, she never caused any conflicts or had anything negative to say about anyone. Her consistently amicable nature earned her admiration from both the judges and her fellow contestants. In the round following the diss battle, Bryn found herself facing the same opponent, Mckdaddy, but this time, their task was to collaborate and work together instead of engaging in a

dissing battle. Despite their previous confrontation, Bryn and Mckdaddy had no issues putting their differences aside and easily found common ground on how they wanted to deliver their performance. Their ability to set aside personal animosity and focus on creating a cohesive and impressive stage further showcased Bryn's professionalism and willingness to work harmoniously with others.

Apart from Bryn, Yunhway, and Swervy there was another female rapper in SMTM8 named Yuja, who also fell into the category of being a "nice and cute" rapper. Unlike the other contestants who had connections or prior song releases, Yuja entered the competition with no established background in the industry. While she performed well in the first two rounds, it became apparent in the third round that she struggled with creating lyrics for well-known beats; additionally, performing on a larger stage seemed to intimidate her, affecting her overall confidence.

Despite her subpar performance in the third round, Swings, one of the producers in SMTM8, decided to pass Yuja through to the next round. But unfortunately, her journey on the show came to an end in the fourth round. Yuja's difficulties in adapting to the competitive environment of SMTM became more evident, and she was unable to deliver a performance that resonated with the judges and audience.

Yunhway's journey on SMTM8 came to an end during the duo performance round, where she faced a defeat alongside her partner. As for Bryn, she managed to progress further in the competition and reached the highly anticipated first live performance, also known as the quarterfinals. This was a significant milestone, as she became the first female rapper in SMTM history to reach the top eight stage of the competition. Her achievement was noteworthy, considering that it had taken eight years since the first season for a female rapper to make such a significant impact and breakthrough in the show.

Bryn's accomplishment not only showcased her talent and dedication but also broke barriers for future female contestants on SMTM. It served as a testament to the growing recognition and acceptance of women in the Korean Hip-Hop scene, as their presence and contributions continued to gain prominence and respect.

In *Show Me the Money 9*, Mirani stood out as the sole significant female contestant in the competition. Prior to her appearance on the show, Mirani only had a connection with another contestant, Munchman, who had participated in the previous season. Throughout the season, Mirani displayed a generally relaxed demeanor outside of her performances; unfortunately, once on stage during the first three rounds, she visibly exhibited signs of stress and pressure.

SMTM9 had some notable differences compared to previous seasons due to the impact of COVID-19. The season was shorter in duration and implemented stricter safety precautions to ensure the well-being of the participants and staff. Additionally, a major change was introduced in the structure of the competition, the semi-finals now featured eight contestants, whereas in previous seasons, there were four semi-finalists; the finals also had four contestants instead of the usual two.

Mirani managed to advance to the semi-finals, showcasing her talent and determination throughout her journey on the show. However, in the semi-finals, she faced tough competition and ultimately lost to Lil Boi, an established rapper who would eventually emerge as the winner of SMTM9.

Despite not claiming the top spot, Mirani's participation in the show allowed her to gain exposure and recognition in the Korean hip-hop scene. Her presence as a talented female rapper contributed to the diversification of the competition and further highlighted the growing prominence of women in the genre.

In *Show Me the Money 10*, another notable female contestant who made it past the first round was Since. The previous year, Since had participated in SMTM9 alongside Mirani, although her appearance was relatively brief.

Since released her debut album, titled "Since 16'," earlier in 2021, receiving critical acclaim for her work. When SMTM10 began shooting in October 2021, Since had gained significant recognition and endorsement from various rappers in the industry. Notably, she received support from Deepflow, a highly respected South Korean rapper and the CEO of a record label. Throughout the competition, Since showcased confidence, warmth, and gratitude towards the team she had chosen.

A remarkable aspect of Since's journey in SMTM10 was her remarkable stage presence, ultimately securing the second-place position. Interestingly, she ended up losing to her own teammate, marking the first time in the show's history that the top two contestants were from the same team. This outcome demonstrated the strength and talent within their team and highlighted Since's exceptional abilities as a rapper.

Show Me the Money 11 introduced a somewhat controversial contestant right from the beginning: Lee Young-ji. Following her victory in HSR3, Lee Young-ji took part in numerous comedic daytime TV shows, ultimately leading many people to associate her more with comedy rather than her rap skills. As a result, when she returned to the rap competition format, her participation was met with mixed reactions.

Despite releasing a few singles and collaborating on various songs, Lee Young-ji hadn't achieved significant success in the music industry. This factor, coupled with the perception that she had shifted her focus from rap to comedy, contributed to the lukewarm reception of her return to the competition scene. Some viewers questioned her motivations for joining SMTM11, considering her previous triumph in HSR3 and her subsequent involvement in comedy shows.

Nevertheless, Lee Young-ji's decision to participate in SMTM11 provided her with an opportunity to showcase her rap skills once again and potentially challenge the preconceived notions held by the audience. The season would prove to be a crucial turning point for her career, as she aimed to prove herself as a serious rapper and reclaim her position in the hip-hop realm.

Lee Young-ji wasn't the sole female contestant in SMTM11; she was joined by Damini and Goney. Goney, in particular, stood out as a high school student representing SOPA, a prestigious South Korean music school known for nurturing K-Pop idols. While Goney displayed a youthful and somewhat naive demeanor offstage, her confidence noticeably grew when she stepped onto the stage.

Despite delivering solid performances without any noticeable errors, Goney faced elimination in the fourth round. The producers justified their decision by stating that she still had much to learn. This outcome was puzzling, as Goney's talent and potential were evident; nonetheless, the competitive nature of the show and the producers ultimately determined her fate.

Damini, hailed as the "*Rising Rookie of the Hip-Hop Scene*", made a strong impression on SMTM11 due to her previous collaboration with Huckberry P on the track "Wolves". Her distinct and aggressive rap style garnered praise from all the producers involved in the competition. Damini showcased her potential as a talented and promising rapper. However, in the sixth round of SMTM11, the diss battle, Damini faced an unfortunate setback that led to her elimination; it was evident that she had forgotten her lyrics, resulting in a significant portion of her performance without any rap.

Lee Young-ji's journey on SMTM11 was not without its share of mistakes and blunders. Despite making several errors throughout the season, she consistently managed to avoid elimination, which became a running joke among the contestants. Despite these slip-ups, Lee Young-ji maintained her passion for rapping and often emphasized that her primary motivation for joining the show was her love for the art form, rather than the pursuit of money or victory.

In a historic moment, Lee Young-ji emerged as the first woman to be crowned the winner of SMTM11, solidifying her status as a female trailblazer in the realm of Hip-Hop competitions.

This achievement not only marked her as a standout artist but also made her the only woman to have triumphed in both HSR and SMTM, further cementing her legacy in the rap scene.

Lee Young-ji's victory served as a testament to her talent, resilience, and ability to overcome obstacles. Her triumph showcased the power of passion and authenticity in music, inspiring aspiring female artists to pursue their dreams and break barriers in the male-dominated industry.

So, the seasons from SMTM8 to SMTM11 presented a diverse range of experiences for female contestants, with a mix of positive and negative outcomes. Many of the female participants had some level of connection or affiliation with established figures in the Korean hip-hop scene, which provided them with a certain level of exposure and support; but there were also women like Yuja and Goney who entered the competition as newcomers, without any prior connections or experience in the industry.

Despite their lack of connections, Yuja and Goney managed to make an impact in their respective seasons. Their success demonstrated the potential for newcomers to carve out a place for themselves in the highly competitive realm of Korean hip-hop.

The presence of both connected and independent female contestants in these seasons provided a balance of perspectives and experiences. While the connections may have provided some advantages, it also served as a reminder that talent and hard work can propel newcomers to success.

Nonetheless, the female contestants who already had some level of recognition or a budding career in the music industry were often subject to controversy regarding their advancement on the show. However, whether their progression was influenced or rigged remains a matter of interpretation and individual perspective. It's important to note that reality TV shows often generate discussions and debates about fairness and transparency in the judging process.

Despite the controversies surrounding their participation, contestants such as Yunhway from SMTM8 and Mirani from SMTM9 have publicly spoken about their experiences on the show in positive terms. In interviews, they expressed gratitude for the opportunities and attention they received after their appearances. Mirani, in particular, went on to sign with the company of her SMTM9 team's producers, AREA, which further solidified her career prospects in the music industry ([esnatherson, 2020](#); [Nh, 2021](#)).

These interviews shed light on the fact that while there may be controversies surrounding the judging and decision-making processes, the contestants themselves have expressed satisfaction and appreciation for the exposure and career opportunities that the show provided.

Content Analysis: Three South Korean rap competitions

Ultimately, the impact and experiences of each contestant can vary, and it's important to consider multiple perspectives when assessing the fairness and outcomes of their journeys on the show.

4. Analysis of rap songs from men in South Korean rap competitions

4.1 Introduction

South Korean rap competitions have become an influential platform for aspiring artists to showcase their lyrical prowess and musical skills. The genre of rap, once dominated by Western artists, has seen a tremendous surge in popularity within South Korea's music industry. Rap competitions, such as *Show Me The Money* and *High School Rapper* have not only provided a stage for emerging talent but have also played a pivotal role in shaping the rap landscape in South Korea.

This analysis seeks to explore the various ways in which women are mentioned in rap songs by male artists in those competitions. These mentions may range from romantic interests and muses to personal experiences and negative connotations. By dissecting these references, we can identify recurring patterns, stereotypes, and underlying attitudes that shape the artists' portrayals of women.

Furthermore, this analysis aims to shed light on the evolution of these portrayals over time. As the South Korean rap scene has matured and diversified, artists have had opportunities to challenge traditional narratives and redefine the representation of women in their music.

The conclusions for this analysis will offer an opportunity to examine the evolving dynamics between gender, music, and culture. By exploring the lyrics, themes, and narratives, we can identify the prevailing attitudes, stereotypes, and narratives that shape the portrayal of women within the rap industry. Ultimately, this analysis seeks to foster a critical dialogue surrounding gender representation and contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between rap music and societal attitudes in South Korea.

4.2 Method of research

The only song researched were the ones released in the official discography of these shows; this is due to the fact that only the released songs are available outside of the show, with them also counting for music download, streaming sites, and the music charts. Another condition had to be added since there are female contestants on the show; the only songs in the research are the ones which are from male contestants, if it's a team song and there is a female contestant, her lyrics will not be accounted for.

After looking through the songs and collecting the important lyrics, they will then be placed in one of three connotation categories:

- Positive – When a song only mentions women in a positive way. The positivity must be about a woman and not just the use of a passing mention with a positive undertone.
- Negative – When a song explicitly mentions women in a negative way. This might be through the use of misogynist words or negative stereotypes.
- Neutral – When the answer to whether the lyrics are negative or positive is hard to define or when the rapper only used women as a passing mention in a sentence.

Upon looking at the songs researched there was another important factor collected from the lyrics, the songs that mentioned mothers. Since rap is a form of artistic expression that often reflects and comments on the social, cultural, and political issues prevalent in a society, it is important to understand why and how they portray a mother figure. Usually, the mother figure holds a significant place within South Korean culture, symbolizing love, sacrifice, and familial values ([Kun-Ha, 2013](#)).

4.3 Show Me the Money

All Songs	Mention women	Neutral	Positive	Negative
235	90	37	36	17

Table 1: Number analysis of songs from SMTM rapped by male contestants.

Show Me the Money's official discography has 235 songs by male rappers, out of those 90 mention women, which is 38% of every song in the show.

Out of those 90 mentions of women a majority was classified as neutral; however, that neutral majority does lean on a negative side, as can be seen in the following lyrics:

Contestant	Song	Lyrics
Zizo	"Like That"	<i>If she sees me at the club, she can't go home alone Where are you going? Let's play today Alright</i>
Bobby	"L4L (Lookin' For Luv)" feat. Dok2, The Quiett	<i>Many people tell me These chicks ain't loyal But you never know I'm tryna lookin' for something special My bad homie adios All the girls' love here is mine today</i>

Table 2: Example of SMTM songs with neutral connotations of women.

Out of the 90 mentions of women within the songs analyzed, the majority were classified as neutral in nature; however, it is important to note that this neutral majority leans slightly toward the negative side. This is evident in the lyrics seen above which exhibit elements of sexuality, but also intertwine them with a sense of playfulness, blurring the line between the two. It is crucial to recognize that this playfulness alone does not necessarily indicate a negative portrayal of women.

After taking a closer look at the full context of these songs, it becomes evident that these specific lines do not solely convey negative qualities. By considering the broader narrative and the overall message of the song, a more nuanced understanding can be gained, revealing that these lyrics encompass a range of emotions and perspectives.

The inclusion of somewhat sexual or playful lyrics, when viewed in a balanced and comprehensive manner, can be seen as a reflection of the artists' artistic expression rather than a deliberate endorsement of negativity towards women. It is essential to approach these lyrics with an open mind and recognize that music, as a form of creative expression, can be subject to interpretation and can evoke a variety of emotions and responses. It is also crucial to acknowledge that evaluating the portrayal of women in music requires a holistic approach. While specific lines or instances may raise concerns, it is equally important to consider the entirety of the song and the artist's body of work.

Mushvenom	Godok (고독하구만) feat. Superbee	<i>My mom, who I haven't seen in a while, was working so hard She lost her childhood memories I'm their source of pride even at the funeral of my grandma who was smiling brightly in her photo</i>
Swings	B Mine feat. SUMIN	<i>Baby, look at you getting dressed, I've never met a woman who cooked for me Amazing humor, I'm smiling at your sexual jokes</i>
Toigo	Blue Check feat. Jay Park, Jessi	<i>I'm the Hype Boy that NewJeans is looking for</i>

Table 3: Example of SMTM songs with positive connotations of women.

Not far from the songs with neutral connotations, we find a significant number of positive songs, which outnumber the negative ones by more than double. In the examples provided, these positive songs highlight different aspects of women's roles and relationships.

The first song portrays the rapper's mother as a hardworking woman who dedicated her life to raising him. This depiction not only acknowledges the sacrifices and efforts made by mothers but also conveys a deep sense of appreciation and gratitude. The positive connotations of this song stem from its celebration of a strong and loving mother figure, delivering a truly positive and heartfelt message. Similarly, the second song focuses on the rapper's wife and expresses his happiness and contentment in having her in his life. This portrayal of a loving and supportive partner reinforces the positive connotations surrounding women, emphasizing the importance of companionship and mutual affection within a relationship.

Moving on to the third song, its positivity lies in the artists' support for the K-Pop girl group NewJeans. Toigo and Jay Park, both on and off the show, have expressed their admiration for the group. The lyrics of the song reflect this support and serve as a reference to NewJeans' own track titled *Hype Boy*. The positive nature of this song stems from the artists' encouragement and

endorsement of the group, showcasing a collaborative and supportive spirit within the music industry. It is worth mentioning that Jay Park, following his performance with Toigo, took to Instagram Live to express his desire for a collaboration with NewJeans. While no official collaboration has taken place thus far, Jay Park continues to give the group shoutouts from time to time, indicating his ongoing support and admiration.

These positive songs not only convey messages of appreciation, love, and support but also contribute to a more favorable representation of women in SMTM. By showcasing women as hardworking, loving, and talented individuals, these songs help to counterbalance any potential negative connotations and promote a more empowering and uplifting portrayal of women within the competition.

Even though the negative songs are a minority they still exist, and while there are a lot of songs classified in neutral that thread the line, the ones in this category have no redeeming parts. The following are three examples:

Coogie, Superbee, D.Ark	SaimSaim (사임사임) feat. Changmo	<i>chyeah i just fucked yo bitch with my shinin bust down dick</i>
Zizo, Layone, Livur	Icebreaker (쇄빙선)	<i>I dumped the woman I wanted to break her</i>
Mushvenom	Tricker (부어라 비워라)	<i>Streets still filled with intoxicated people Always those who sleep on themselves Women who drench their bodies with alcohol</i>

Table 4: Example of SMTM songs with negative connotations of women.

These three songs all contain misogynistic lyrics with no redeeming quality or further context needed; however, only the first uses more explicit language. Perhaps surprisingly for a rap competition, *Show Me the Money* is rated for all, much like everything else that runs on MNET; nevertheless, these kinds of lyrics are only allowed in the released song, meanwhile when performed on the show they will be bleeped out or changed.

Although the negative songs account for only 18,6% of the songs that mentions women and only 7% of all songs, their portrayal of women is still very important to understand the misogyny and stereotypes of women not just in the show but also in South Korean culture and ultimately from its roots in American Hip-Hop. Because these negative comments usually came from songs aligned with Gangsta rap or Trap, both rap styles born in America; however, it is not only the music style but also the lyrics, which discuss money and women like objects they own or can

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own. The biggest difference to American rap is that they do not mention guns due to South Koreans laws.

Out of the 36 songs with positive connotations 18 are in the last three seasons, from SMTM9 to SMTM11, that's half of the songs with positive connotations on all SMTM. In those same three seasons there were 4 songs with negative connotations, 3 were in SMTM9, 1 was in SMTM10 and SMTM11 had no song the mentioned women negatively. Out of SMTM11's 12 songs, 7 of them were positive and 5 were neutral, this time all of the neutral songs were passing mentions; but of course, there was an important factor in SMTM11's overwhelmingly positive lyrics on women, the main protagonist of the series, Lee Young-ji.

It is clear that throughout the years SMTM tried to keep itself aware of the social issues surrounding it, even when it came to the songs that it produced. The bettering results throughout the series and its latest being only positive can be seen as a sign of change in the society itself, and the wish to accept woman not only into Korean Hip-Hop but also other areas.

Mention mothers	Neutral	Positive	Negative
32	12	18	2

Table 5: Number analysis of songs from SMTM rapped by male contestants that mention mothers.

Lastly, the mentions of mothers, there were 32 out of the 90 songs. Those mentions were mostly overwhelmingly positive or passing mentions with positive undertones.

Mushvenom	Godok (고독하구만) feat. Superbee	<i>My mom, who I haven't seen in a while, was working so hard She lost her childhood memories I'm their source of pride even at the funeral Of my grandma, who was smiling brightly in her photo</i>
Wonstein	No Bad Dogs (세상에 나쁜 개는 없다) feat. Yang Dong-geun, Zion.T	<i>My mom's card can prove that nothing much has changed from before My mother's a preacher, shaking of all temptation</i>

Table 6: Example of SMTM songs with positive connotations of mothers.

The portrayal of mothers in these songs often depicts them as hardworking and loving figures, eliciting profound respect from the rappers who express a heartfelt desire to repay their mothers' love and sacrifices.

This portrayal of mothers aligns seamlessly with the ever-growing positive image of mothers in South Korean culture. Over the years, South Korea has witnessed a significant transformation in societal perceptions of mothers, recognizing their invaluable role as nurturing caretakers and pillars of strength within the family unit. Mothers are increasingly celebrated and esteemed for their unwavering dedication, selflessness, and unconditional love, forming an integral part of the cultural fabric of South Korea (Kun-Ha, 2013).

The inclusion of these songs adds depth and authenticity to the artists' narratives, while simultaneously reinforcing the positive and uplifting representation of women within the show. By highlighting the love, respect, and gratitude towards their mothers, these songs contribute to a broader cultural dialogue that celebrates and appreciates the profound impact of mothers in society.

Chaboom	When The Time Comes (죽어도 좋아) feat. Sunwoo Jung-a, Nucksal	<i>Bedside crying mom, her stockings with holes I have to fill them with money and build my city</i>
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Table 7: Example of SMTM songs with neutral connotations of mothers.

Even within songs that are classified as neutral, a similar view can be shared, as demonstrated by the example above, in which the son seeks to assist his mother who has fallen on hard times, but while the ultimate message of support and assistance is positive, the woman referenced in the song is not explicitly portrayed in a positive or negative light, rendering it a neutral depiction.

In this particular instance, the focus of the song is on the son's desire to provide aid and help his mother overcome difficult circumstances. The neutral portrayal of the woman in the song allows for a broader interpretation, leaving room for listeners to connect with the themes of resilience, compassion, and filial piety. By avoiding explicit positive or negative connotations, the song offers a space for listeners to reflect on their own experiences and personal connections to the narrative. And ultimately, it contributes to a broader understanding of the diverse experiences of women and the complex dynamics within familial relationships. It prompts listeners to contemplate the importance of support, empathy, and solidarity, highlighting the universal themes that transcend specific positive or negative portrayals.

Blacknut	<p>"What Can I Do" (내가 할 수 있는 건) feat. Jessi</p>	<p><i>I wanted to stand on stage and act cool like them Date many women, make a lot of money But I didn't know anything and I just acted like I was all that Baby mama bitches flirted with other guys without their husbands</i></p>
#Gun	<p>"Going Home" (비행소년) feat. Gummy, Mad Clown</p>	<p><i>The coffee was cold and I took the digestive medicine again. I called my mom; I guess she has no son. My Mother who woke up at 12am On our family photo, she tore off Dad's picture</i></p>

Table 8: Example of SMTM songs with negative connotations of mothers.

The two songs above feature negative mentions of mothers and stand out amidst the predominantly positive and neutral portrayals. It is important to note that both songs were created by lyrically controversial artists, with Blacknut in particular having a history of writing negatively about women.

In Blacknut's song, his lyrics "*Baby mama bitches*", appears to refer to pregnant mothers attempting to engage in flirtatious behavior outside of wedlock; even with more context, this mention of women seems to be disconnected from the overall theme of the song, raising questions about its justification.

On the other hand, #Gun's song delves into his personal story, where he portrays his mother as someone who seemingly lacks care for him. While this negative portrayal may seem unmerited at first glance, it is essential to consider that #Gun is sharing his own experiences and presenting his perspective of their relationship. In this context, the negative depiction of his mother carries a subjective weight that cannot be disregarded.

It is crucial to approach these songs with a discerning eye and consider the artist's intentions, personal narratives, and the broader context in which they were created. While Blacknut's lyrics may feel unjustified and disconnected from the song's theme, #Gun's portrayal of his mother, based on his own experiences, holds more authenticity.

These contrasting songs serve as reminders that music, like any form of expression, can be subject to individual interpretation and can reflect the diverse range of experiences and perspectives of the artists. The inclusion of these negative portrayals of mothers within the larger body of songs emphasizes the importance of recognizing the complexities and varying narratives surrounding women.

4.4 High School Rapper

All Songs	Mention women	Neutral	Positive	Negative
100	44	19	20	5

Table 9: Number analysis of songs from *High School Rapper* rapped by male contestants.

High School Rapper's official discography had 100 songs by male rappers, out of those only 44 mention women, which was 44% of every song in the show.

Haon, Pullik	"The Little Prince" (어린 왕자)	<i>What is love We can fly girl When you see me twice So what So what So what So what</i>
Tang The Awesome	"I'm Handsome" (생긴 대로 살아) feat. Giriboy	<i>(See that bro, see that girl, see that)</i>

Table 10: Example of HSR songs with neutral connotations of women.

The songs with neutral connotations often featured passing mentions of women, similar to the two examples mentioned above. However, it is important to note that these mentions do not actively represent women or give them agency within the song's narrative. Instead, women were introduced as mere spectators or peripheral figures, lacking substantial involvement or characterization.

These passing mentions typically serve as a superficial inclusion of women within the lyrics, without exploring their experiences, perspectives, or contributions. This limited representation can be seen as a reinforcement of the notion that women are positioned as passive observers or objects of the male rapper's narrative, rather than active participants with their own stories to tell.

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Lil Nekh, Heo Won- hyuk	"Emoji" (이모티콘)	<i>I miss my grandma even more today She always bought me ice cream in front of my school Though she had no money She always managed to buy it for me</i>
YLN Foreign	"Call Me" feat. Sogumm	<i>I just wanna love Call me baby girl Try to get you You're my one and only</i>

Table 11: Example of HSR songs with positive connotations of women.

HSR's format as a competition for high schoolers often results in beats and themes that lean towards a more youthful and energetic atmosphere. However, there's one notable aspect that contributes to the representation of women, which is that the contestants are not compelled to adhere to specific lyrics or themes. This artistic freedom allows for the exploration of diverse topics, including those that may touch upon the experiences and perspectives that the male rappers have with the women in their lives.

Heo Won-hyuk's decision to rap about his life and his grandmother exemplifies this personal approach to storytelling. By choosing such a theme, he opened the door for a narrative that can highlight the significant role and influence of women in his life. This not only acknowledges the importance of women but also provides an opportunity for their stories and contributions to be recognized and celebrated within the competition.

Similarly, YLN Foreign's love song in a later round, which deviated from any required theme, surprised the audience with its content. The full lyrics of the song can be described as nice and pure, not only demonstrating the artist's artistic versatility but also offering a positive representation of love. By presenting love in a respectful and sincere manner, the song contributed to a more wholesome and inclusive portrayal of relationships, especially those involving women.

In both instances, the personal choices of Heo Won-hyuk and YLN Foreign showcased the potential for *High School Rapper* to provide a platform for artists to express their individual experiences and emotions. This freedom of expression allowed for the inclusion of diverse perspectives, including those related to women, and fostered a richer understanding and appreciation of their stories.

Lil Tachi, Hotchkiss	"Snow" (눈)	<i>I'm busy again because of the women Now my head hurts a little I be flexing on my ex</i>
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Table 12: Example of HSR songs with negative connotations of women.

Throughout its run, *High School Rapper* maintained a remarkable absence of negative comments on women, with only a rare exception. The exception was the song *Snow*, which stood out as a negative portrayal of women, excluding the other songs that specifically commented on mothers.

Lil Tachi, the rapper from whom these lyrics derived from, was generally recognized for his affinity for American rap culture, which extended to his fashion choices and lyrical style. Given this context, it was not too surprising that his lyrics in *Snow* aligned with the more explicit and often objectifying language sometimes associated with American rap.

While the inclusion of such a song may be seen as a departure from the predominantly positive representation of women in HSR, it is essential to consider it within the larger context of the competition. *High School Rapper* encompassed a diverse range of participants, each with their unique artistic preferences and influences. This diversity allowed for the exploration of various styles and perspectives, including those that may deviate from the show's overall emphasis on empowering and respectful portrayals of women.

It is crucial to view Lil Tachi's lyrics in *Snow* as an individual expression rather than a reflection of the show's stance on gender representation. The absence of negative comments on women in the majority of HSR's songs reinforces the commitment to promoting positive and inclusive narratives.

Mention mothers	Neutral	Positive	Negative
29	12	12	4

Table 13: Number analysis of songs from HSR rapped by male contestants that mention mothers.

There were a lot of mentions of mothers in HSR especially when compared with the 32 out of 90 songs in SMTM; in this series there were 29 out of 44, an impressive 65% of the songs in HSR. Of course, it is important to take into account that the contestants are younger, and their mothers are probably more present in their lives.

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Pluma	"How You Doin'?" (요즘 어때) feat. The Quiett	<i>Mom believes in me I believe in myself too</i>
Sokodomo	"Freedumb" feat. Haon	<i>Mama was always right They say if you give love, love will come</i>

Table 14: Example of HSR songs with positive connotations of mothers.

The positive songs in *High School Rapper* not only showcase the love and caring mothers provide to the contestants, but they also emphasize the profound influence and unwavering support that mothers offer throughout their children's journeys. These heartfelt tributes to mothers highlight the integral role they play in shaping the contestants' lives, serving as pillars of strength, encouragement, and guidance. By demonstrating the profound impact of maternal love, the examples above remind audiences that behind these successful rappers are the sacrifices, nurturing, and unyielding belief in their potential that only a mother can provide.

Vinxen	"Cause" (탓)	<i>My mother suffers because I can't make money I don't want to get a part-time job so I stopped visiting my mom</i>
Haon, Vinxen	"Bar Code" (바코드)	<i>How does mom feel when she scans the barcode? I want to ask, but will I get hurt if I know?</i>

Table 15: Example of HSR songs with neutral connotations of mothers.

Vinxen is indeed a prime example when it comes to illustrating neutral connotations in *High School Rapper* songs. While he navigates through his struggles with depression and other mental illnesses, he refrains from placing blame on his mother for his problems. Instead, he predominantly shoulders the responsibility himself, acknowledging his own shortcomings and expressing a desire to do more for his mother.

It's worth noting that Vinxen emphasizes the ongoing support he receives from his parents despite his decreased visits, highlighting their unwavering assistance. This showcases a nuanced perspective that goes beyond assigning blame, demonstrating his appreciation for their continued care amidst his personal challenges.

In contrast to Vinxen's introspective tracks, the other neutral songs in HSR predominantly embrace positivity. These compositions often revolve around the rappers' excitement about their participation in the show and their aspirations for fame, utilizing lyrics that celebrate their journeys alongside their mothers. Together, these songs contribute to the overall tapestry of HSR,

showcasing a range of emotions and experiences while highlighting the unique connections between the contestants and their mothers.

Jaeha	"I'm Fine" feat. Yumdda	<i>I'm going from no one to someone My mom didn't even believe in me but I was desperate</i>
Trade L	"Supernova" feat. Changmo, GSoul, Dut2	<i>My mom raised me like treasure "Just go to college like a normal person and make money" On our way home, my mom's car was always filled with tears Sorry, mom</i>

Table 16: Example of HSR songs with negative connotations of mothers.

Lastly, it's important to acknowledge the presence of negative connotations connected to mothers in HSR although they were relatively rare. These instances reflected a different aspect of the contestants' experiences, where the focus shifted to the unsupportive nature of their mothers, leading to lyrics that delve into personal and often painful emotions.

It is crucial to note that the negative comments about mothers in these songs were not rooted in misogynistic views. Instead, they stemmed from the specific ways in which the rappers felt they were personally treated by their mothers. The lyrics served as a means for the rappers to express their frustrations and challenges within their familial relationships, highlighting the complexities and conflicts they faced.

4.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of the songs in both SMTM and HSR demonstrates a range of themes, encompassing both positive and negative portrayals. In them it is evident that both shows are making conscious efforts to evolve and improve their representation.

This can be seen as a reflection of the changing roles of women in South Korea and how they should be perceived within society. South Korea has been experiencing a shift in the perception of women, with evolving societal expectations and a recognition of their significant contributions; while women may still be underrepresented in positions of power, they continue to play a critical role in the country's economy and contribute to its overall growth and development ([Lowe-Lee, 2020](#)).

Most of the negative songs in *Show Me the Money* were often characterized by their aggressive and confrontational lyrics, reminiscent of certain elements found in American Hip-Hop. However, as the seasons progressed, there was a noticeable decline in the prevalence of such songs.

This can be attributed to the adaptation of Korean Hip-Hop to align itself with market trends and compete with the dominant force of K-Pop in order to remain commercially viable and appeal to a wider audience; KHH artists recognized the need to incorporate elements that would resonate with listeners, particularly women. This shift in approach stemmed from the understanding that women constitute a significant consumer base for male K-Pop idols, as they actively support and purchase albums from their favorite artists ([Yoon, 2022](#)).

As a result, there has been an increasing fusion of K-Pop and KHH, with artists seamlessly transitioning between the two genres. This blending of styles not only enhanced the marketability of the music but also allowed for greater diversity in sound and appeal. By incorporating more melodic and accessible elements into their music, KHH rappers are now able to reach a broader audience, including a significant female fanbase.

It is commendable to observe that *High School Rapper* has maintained a largely positive stance by avoiding misogynistic ideals. Even in songs that had negative connotations towards women, it is important to note that the lyrics predominantly stemmed from the artists' intentions to convey their personal experiences and perspectives rather than perpetuating harmful stereotypes or demeaning attitudes.

While some songs touched upon challenging or conflicting interactions with women, it is crucial to differentiate between the artists' subjective portrayals and the endorsement of harmful stereotypes. *High School Rapper's* focus on personal storytelling allowed for a deeper understanding of the diverse experiences and emotions of the participants, fostering empathy and dialogue rather than perpetuating negative attitudes towards women.

Overall, *High School Rapper's* commitment to providing a space for authentic expression while discouraging misogynistic ideals set a positive example for other media and entertainment platforms and reinforced the importance of promoting respectful and inclusive narratives.

It is crucial to understand that *Show Me the Money* also had a lot of negative lyrics that stemmed from personal experiences. The nature of music, like any other form of artistic expression, allows for a wide range of interpretations and perspectives, so what one person may perceive as misogynistic, another might perceive as an honest expression of personal experience.

Artists often use their lyrics to convey their emotions, experiences, and reflections on various aspects of life, including relationships and societal dynamics. While some lyrics may touch upon gender-related themes, it is essential to approach them with an understanding that they may simply reflect the artist's subjective viewpoint and not necessarily promote misogyny.

By actively listening, analyzing, and discussing the lyrics, we can gain a deeper understanding of the artists' intentions and explore different interpretations. This allows for critical thinking and fosters a more nuanced understanding of the diverse perspectives and experiences shared through music. By acknowledging the potential for varied interpretations, we can approach discussions about gender-related themes in these shows with sensitivity and respect for differing viewpoints. This helps create an environment that encourages thoughtful conversations about the complexities of personal expression and the impact of music on society as a whole.

While the analysis in this study has reached certain conclusions, it is important to remember that these interpretations are not the sole definitive understanding of the songs. Artistic works, including music, are open to multiple interpretations and can evoke different emotions and meanings for different people. The richness of these interpretations contributes to the depth and complexity of the artistic experience.

Engaging in healthy discussions surrounding these artistic works would undoubtedly enhance our understanding of the intentions and messages behind the songs. Through open and respectful dialogue, we can delve deeper into the complexities of the themes and foster a more comprehensive appreciation of the subject matter.

Moreover, it is important to recognize that this analysis represents a specific moment in time. The music industry and societal attitudes are continuously evolving, and future analyses may yield different conclusions. As cultural and social dynamics shift, the portrayal of women in music and the narratives expressed by artists may also undergo transformation. Therefore, ongoing research and exploration are necessary to capture the ever-changing landscape of music and its relationship with gender.

Lastly, it is crucial to acknowledge and respect the diversity of opinions surrounding these artistic works. Different individuals may interpret the songs in unique ways based on their personal experiences, cultural backgrounds, and individual perspectives. Recognizing and embracing this diversity of opinions is vital for fostering healthy discussions and promoting a deeper understanding of the songs.

5. The Future

5.1 Reflections and Suggestions

After seeing the three shows, it is clear that throughout the years they have changed for the better, even if they are not perfect it is clear they are taking the road there. Although there is change, it does not mean that what happened before should be forgotten, so it would be only fair to see previous female contestants, especially those that participated in *Unpretty Rapstar*, receive a second chance in *Show Me the Money*, since it is the only rap competition out of the three that might still continue in 2023.

If *Show Me the Money* is canceled, - something which has neither been confirmed nor denied, but seems rather likely since the show did not appear on the yearly calendar from MNET programs - it would be good to have a new female led rap competition, this time without a lot of drama and newer female faces in Korean Hip-Hop. It could work like *Show Me the Money* by having an open audition or like *Unpretty Rapstar* with pre-selected contestants, but I believe launching new women into this industry would be essential, since at some point it will be difficult to rely on only those that are already famous, especially when there is likely to be some "evil" editing.

On the note of making someone seem worse than they are to generate more discussion and therefore more views, it would probably be for the best to admit and maybe have a disclaimer at the start of the show that there will be some editing; this would assist in not destroying the careers of those artists. Of course, a lot of these series rely on drama and a sense of realism in people's reactions, so making a disclaimer mentioning the editing of the series could negatively affect it.

The "evil" editing is probably part of the reason these series have their contestants and producers under strict NDA's and contracts, in other terms it is probably so that even if the way they were portrayed is not their real self, they cannot openly discuss it without facing litigation. But this kind of editing is not something that can be hidden forever so eventually people will find out what's happened to these people; this could be seen in the case of Yezi, who MNET edited to look like she was being rude with the expressions she made, meanwhile she is actually hard of hearing and could not understand what people were saying ([Pullip, 2015](#)). So, in the end, hiding

the editing although it might make the series seem genuine reality for a moment, eventually all that has been changed will come out to sour the experience.

It is also important to note that MNET is owned by CJ E&M, which in turn is part of the CJ Group, known for being a “*chaebol*”, one of the biggest companies in all of South Korea, which expands to all kinds of businesses, from food to pharmaceuticals, logistics and of course entertainments. Hence another problem with not following the rules set by MNET or just having a bad experience in one of these shows is how easy it is for an artist to be blacklisted from the entertainment industry as a whole. However, while it is possible to be blacklisted due to the sheer power a company like this has, it is also very hard to prove an artist has been blacklisted.

Traditionally, South Korea had a deeply ingrained patriarchal society, where women were expected to conform to strict gender roles and faced numerous barriers in pursuing careers in male-dominated fields, including music. However, as the influence of Western culture increased and South Korea became more globally connected, the societal landscape began to shift. In the realm of Hip-Hop, South Korea witnessed a gradual emergence of female artists who challenged societal norms and stereotypes. Although Jessi was born in America, she is one of Korean Hip-Hop’s most recognizable female rappers, both for her rap and honesty. Throughout the years Jessi was open about her plastic surgeries, which is something that famous artists in South Korea who get it usually keep secret; she also talked about having darker skin, piercings, and tattoos which go against the image set for “*idols*”, and how she believed that one day she would be accepted no matter the hardships she had to go through.

It is also worth noting that these shows have provided a platform for female rappers who challenge conventional beauty standards and promote self-acceptance. Not all female contestants fit the typical Korean beauty ideal, and some have gained popularity for their unique style and individuality. Lee Young-ji is one of those cases, when she first appeared in *High School Rapper 3*, it was clear that she did not fit into the Korean beauty standards due to being slightly overweight; even after losing weight, when Lee Young-ji reappeared in *Show Me the Money 11*, she did not meet all the beauty standards. In the show, Lee Young-ji discussed how previous negative comments on her looks had affected her, but she had since moved past it and learned to believe in herself. To this day Lee Young-ji has not had any plastic surgeries and continues to use minimal to no makeup, so even if she does not meet the Korean beauty standards there is no doubt, she’s one of the main faces of women in Korean Hip-Hop.

In the end, it is important to understand that while appearance plays a big role in South Korea's entertainment industry, including shows like *Unpretty Rapstar* and *Show Me the Money*, attractiveness alone does not guarantee success or talent in these programs. It is crucial to recognize that the portrayal of attractiveness varies across cultures and can be subjective, and

South Korea has its own beauty standards, influenced by a combination of traditional Korean aesthetics and global beauty trends.

In relation to the songs by male rappers in *Show Me the Money* and *High School Rapper*, while South Korean rappers reflect the society they live in, they also possess their own individual ways of thinking that may not always be fully depicted in television series due to the image that needs to be projected. This can be due to commercial considerations, maintaining a particular brand, or catering to a specific target audience, so as a result, the full range of a rapper's individual thoughts and perspectives may not always be fully showcased in this context.

The need to conform to a certain image can restrict the expression of more nuanced or controversial ideas that these rappers may hold. Additionally, the focus of television series was on the entertainment value or storytelling rather than providing a platform for the in-depth exploration of an artist's personal philosophy or worldviews.

Therefore, while the male rappers in these shows can serve as a mirror to society by reflecting its issues and concerns, their own unique ways of thinking may not always be prominently displayed in television series due to the necessary image that needs to be portrayed in those specific contexts.

Ultimately, while it is still mainly male dominated, women are trying and so far, succeeding at breaking the stereotypes and making it into the spotlight. Hopefully in the following years there will be more changes to shows like *Show Me the Money* and hopefully a second rap competition which focuses on female rappers only.

5.2 Future work

At the start of making this thesis there were initially three questions. Unfortunately, due to a surgery I had to undergo which ended up creating some time constraints, the last question could not be researched.

And so “*How do female fans feel about the portrayal of women in rap survival shows?*” was left for future work. It is, without doubt, important to analyze the opinion and response of fans, and especially female fans, toward the representation and characterization of women in these series. That work by itself could be used as the main question of a thesis, since it is vast and requires a lot more research.

So, here's an explanation of why and how the question could be answered:

1. **Justification for qualitative research methods:** Qualitative research methods are more suitable for exploring subjective experiences, perceptions, and emotions. Understanding how fans feel about the portrayal of women in rap survival shows requires capturing their nuanced perspectives and engaging in an in-depth exploration of their thoughts and emotions. Qualitative methods such as interviews and focus groups allow researchers to gather important contextual data that can provide insights into the experiences and viewpoints of female fans.
2. **Sampling and participant recruitment:** To answer this question, the researchers would need to identify and recruit a diverse sample of female fans who actively engage with these rap competition shows. This can be done through various methods such as online forums, social media platforms or fan communities. It is important to ensure a diverse range of participants in terms of age, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, and geographical location to capture a broad spectrum of perspectives.
3. **Data collection through interviews and focus groups:** Researchers can conduct individual interviews or group focus discussions with the selected participants. These sessions would involve open-ended questions that encourage participants to share their thoughts, emotions, and opinions regarding the portrayal of women in rap survival shows. Researchers should create a comfortable and non-judgmental environment to encourage participants to express their genuine feelings and engage in reflective discussions.
4. **Thematic analysis and interpretation:** After data collection, the researchers would transcribe and analyze the interviews or focus group discussions using thematic analysis. This involves identifying patterns, recurring themes, and key ideas that emerge from the data. They would then gather the participants' responses to identify commonalities, divergences, and any underlying emotions associated with the portrayal of women in rap survival shows.
5. **Triangulation with content analysis and social media discussions:** To complement the qualitative findings, researchers can also look into the previous research in this document in order to connect it to the thoughts of fans and what actually happened in the series. Additionally, they can analyze social media discussions, comments, and

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online forums where female fans engage in conversations about the shows. This provides a broader perspective and allows for triangulation of findings from different sources.

6. Data interpretation and conclusion: Based on the thematic analysis of interviews, content analysis, and social media discussions, researchers can interpret the data and draw conclusions about how female fans feel about the portrayal of women in rap survival competitions. They can identify common sentiments, emotional responses, and overarching themes that emerge from the data.

By employing a combination of qualitative research methods, content analysis, and social media analysis. This approach allows for a nuanced exploration of perspectives, emotions, and engagement with the media content, contributing to the ongoing discourse on gender representation and providing insights for future programming decisions.

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7. Attachments

7.1 Show Me the Money Song Table

Season	Episode	Round	Contestant	Song	References women	Connotation
1	N/A	N/A	Hoony Hoon	"In the Air" feat. Giyu	Yes	Negative
1	N/A	N/A	Verbal Jint	"Storm" feat. Swings, Kanto	No	
1	N/A	N/A	MC Sniper	"14 Round" feat. Egobomb, Quartz	Yes	Positive
1	N/A	N/A	45RPM, Illtong	"Headbutt" (박치기)	No	
1	N/A	N/A	Joosuc, Kim Jeong-hoon	"The Last Supper" (최후의 만찬)	No	
1	N/A	N/A	Double K, Loco	"Home" feat. Jinsil	No	
1	N/A	N/A	MC Sniper	"I Loved You" (사랑했잖아) feat. Loco, Son Seung-yeon	No	
1	N/A	N/A	MC Sniper	"Sunset Glow" (붉은 노을) feat. Kim Ji-soo, Egobomb	No	

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2	Ep.4	N/A	J'Kyun	"Heaven" feat. Oh Su-min	No	
2	N/A	N/A	Soul Dive, Wutan	"Please Wait" (기다려줘) feat. Lee Seong-su	No	
2	N/A	N/A	Zizo	"Like That"	Yes	Negative
2	Ep.8	N/A	Soul Dive	"Missing"	No	
3	Ep.6	1st Pf.	Olltii	"Oll' Ready"	No	
3	Ep.6	1st Pf.	B.I	"Be I"	No	
3	Ep.6	1st Pf.	Iron	"I Am"	No	
3	Ep.7	1st Pf.	Bobby	"Go" (가)	No	
3	Ep.7	1st Pf.	Vasco	"Guerrilla's Way"	No	
3	Ep.8	2nd Pf.	Bobby	"L4L (Lookin' For Luv)" feat. Dok2, The Quiett	Yes	Neutral
3	Ep.8	2nd Pf.	Olltii	"That XX" (ㄱ XX) feat. Zico	N/A	
3	Ep.8	2nd Pf.	Vasco	"187" feat. Im Sung-hyun	No	
3	Ep.9	2nd Pf.	C Jamm	"Good Day" feat. Swings	Yes	Positive

3	Ep.9	Semi F.	Bobby	"YGGR#Hip Hop" (연결고리#힙합)	No	
3	Ep.10	Semi F.	C Jamm	"Shit"	Yes	Neutral
3	Ep.10	Semi F.	Iron	"Malice" (독기)	No	
3	Ep.10	Final	Bobby	"Raise Your Guard And Bounce" (가드올리고 Bounce)	Yes	Neutral
3	Ep.10	Final	Vasco	"Unfinished Story" (못다한 이야기) feat. Kim Na-young	Yes	Neutral
4	Ep.5	Team Pf.	Sik-K, Lil Boi, Geegoin	"Respect" feat. Loco, Gray, DJ Pumkin	No	
4	Ep.5	Team Pf.	Innovator, Incredivle, Superbee	"OG (Be Original)"	Yes	Neutral
4	Ep.5	Team Pf.	Basick, Blacknut, Microdot	"My Zone" feat. San E, Verbal Jint	No	
4	Ep.6	Team Pf.	Ja Mezz, AndUp, Song Min-ho	"Turtle Ship" (거북선) feat. Paloalto	No	
4	Ep.7	1st Pf.	Song Min-ho, Zico, Paloalto	"Moneyflow" (다 비켜봐)	No	
4	Ep.7	1st Pf.	Lil Boi, Loco, Jay Park	"On It + Bo\$\$"	Yes	Positive
4	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Basick	"Gxnzi" feat. Vasco	Yes	Negative

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4	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Innovator	"More Than a TV Star" feat. Lee Hi	Yes	Positive
4	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Blacknut, Verbal Jint, San E	"M.I.L.E. (Make It Look Easy)"	Yes	Neutral
4	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Incredible, Tablo, Jinusean	"Oppa's Car" (오빠차)	Yes	Neutral
4	Ep.9	Semi F.	Song Min-ho	"Fear" (겁) feat. Taeyang	No	
4	Ep.9	Semi F.	Blacknut	"What Can I Do" (내가 할 수 있는 건) feat. Jessi	Yes	Negative
4	Ep.9	Semi F.	Basick	"Stand Up" feat. Mamamoo	Yes	Positive
4	Ep.10	Final	Song Min-ho, Zico	"Okey Dokey"	Yes	Neutral
4	Ep.10	Final	Basick	"Better Days" (좋은 날) feat. Gummy	Yes	Positive
4	Ep.10	Final	Song Min-ho	"Victim + Poppin Bottles" (Victim + 위하여) feat. B-Free, Paloalto	Yes	Positive
4	Ep.10	Final	Basick, Verbal Jint, San E	"I'm The Man"	Yes	Positive
4	Ep.10	Extra	One, Hanhae, Geegooin, P-Type	"Next Level"	Yes	Negative
5	Ep.6	Team Pf.	Simon Dominic, One, G2, BewhY	"I'm Not The Person You Used To Know" (니가 알던 내가 아냐)	N/A	

5	Ep.6	Team Pf.	The Quiett, Superbee, myunDo, Flowsik, Dok2	"Air DoTheQ" (공중도덕)	No	
5	Ep.6	Team Pf.	Zion.T, C Jamm, Reddy, Xitsuh	"\$insa" (신사)	No	
5	Ep.6	Team Pf.	Mad Clown, Donutman, Boi B, #Gun	"Rose of Sharon" (무궁화)	No	
5	Ep.7	1st Pf.	Mad Clown, #Gun	"Going Home" (비행소년) feat. Gummy	N/A	
5	Ep.7	1st Pf.	Simon Dominic, Gray, One	"Comfortable" (맘 편히)	Yes	Positive
5	Ep.8	1st Pf.	C Jamm, Reddy	"Wanted" (현상수배)	No	
5	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Superbee, myunDo	"Beverly 1lls"	No	
5	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Flowsik, The Quiett, Dok2	"Rapstar (remix)"	N/A	
5	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Zion.T, Xitsuh	"Drummer" (드러머) feat. Olltii	N/A	
5	Ep.8	1st Pf.	BewhY	"Forever"	No	
5	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Boi B	"Swallowtail" (호랑나비) feat. Gill, Rhythm Power, Kim Heung- gook	Yes	Neutral
5	Ep.9	Semi F.	#Gun	"Crazy Guy" (미친놈) feat. Jessi	No	

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5	Ep.9	Semi F.	C Jamm	"Beautiful" (아름다워) feat. Zico	Yes	Positive
5	Ep.9	Semi F.	Xitsuh	"And" (끝) feat. Suran	No	
5	Ep.9	Semi F.	Superbee	"Sun Block" (썬 블락) feat. Microdot	No	
5	Ep.9	Semi F.	BewhY	"Day Day" feat. Jay Park	Yes	Neutral
5	Ep.9	Semi F.	Reddy	"Like This" feat. Bobby	Yes	Neutral
5	Ep.10	Final	The Quiett, Dok2, Superbee	"Air DoTheQ part 2" (공중도덕 part 2)	No	
5	Ep.10	Final	C Jamm	"MM"	Yes	Neutral
5	Ep.10	Final	BewhY, Simon Dominic	"XamBaQJa" (쌘박자)	Yes	Negative
5	Ep.10	Final	C Jamm	"Let It Be" (재방송) feat. Crush	No	
5	Ep.10	Final	BewhY	"Fake" (자화상 part 2)	No	
5	Ep.10	Extra	Flowsik, Hash Swan, Boi B, WuNo, G2	"Goblin" (도깨비)	No	
6	Ep.6	Team Pf.	Hanhae, Ryno, Nucksal, Jo Woo-chan	"1/N" (N분의 1) feat. Dynamic Duo	No	
6	Ep.6	Team Pf.	Maniac, Black Nine, Asol, Woo Won-jae	"Chopsticks" (젓가락)	No	

				feat. Tiger JK, Bizzy, Ann One		
6	Ep.6	Team Pf.	Ja Mezz, Ness, Woodie Go Child, Junoflo	"Life Is A Gamble" (도박) feat. Jay Park, Dok2	No	
6	Ep.6	Team Pf.	Young B, Hash Swan, Killagramz, Hangzoo	"People These Days" (요즘것들) feat. Zico, Dean	No	
6	Ep.7	1st Pf.	Killagramz	"Where" (어디) feat. Zico, Dean	No	
6	Ep.7	1st Pf.	Hanhae	"Gather At The Lobby" (로비로 모여) feat. Dynamic Duo, Chungha, Muzie	Yes	Neutral
6	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Maniac	"Killin It" feat. Koonta, Babylon	Yes	Negative
6	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Junoflo	"Eyes On Me" feat. G.Soul, Dok2	No	
6	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Ja Mezz	"Birthday" feat. Jay Park, Dok2	No	
6	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Woo Won-jae	"Again" (또) feat. Tiger JK, Bizzy, MRSHLL	No	
6	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Hangzoo, Young B	"Search" feat. Car, the garden, Zico	Yes	Neutral
6	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Nucksal, Jo Woo-chan	"What You Call Is The Price" (부르는 게 값이야) feat. Gaeko, Don Mills	No	
6	Ep.9	Semi F.	Jo Woo-chan	"VVIP" feat. Sik-K, Gaeko	No	

Attachments

6	Ep.9	Semi F.	Woo Won-jae	"Pendulum" (진자 (Zinza)) feat. YDG, Suran	No	
6	Ep.9	Semi F.	Hanhae	"One Sun" feat. Shin Yong-jae, Gaeko	No	
6	Ep.9	Semi F.	Hangzoo	"Red Sun" feat. Zico, Swings	No	
6	Ep.9	Semi F.	Junoflo	"Twisted" (비틀어) feat. Kim Hyo-eun, Changmo	No	
6	Ep.9	Semi F.	Nucksal	"Filament" (필라멘트) feat. Kim Bum-soo	No	
6	Ep.10	Final	Nucksal	"Born Expert" (천상공) feat. Dynamic Duo, DJ Friz	No	
6	Ep.10	Final	Hangzoo	"Bestdriverz" feat. Dean, Zion.T	No	
6	Ep.10	Final	Woo Won-jae	"Move" feat. Bizzy	No	
6	Ep.10	Final	Nucksal	"Even When the Curtains Fall" (막이 내려도) feat. Gaeko	No	
6	Ep.10	Final	Hangzoo	"Turn Around" (돌리고) feat. DJ Doc	No	
777	Ep.5	Team Pf.	Coogie, Superbee, D.Ark	SaimSaim (사임사임) feat. Changmo	Yes	Negative
777	Ep.5	Team Pf.	Nafla, OLNL, ODEE	Science Fiction Technology (공상과학기술) feat. Giriboy, Swings	No	

777	Ep.5	Team Pf.	Keem Hyo-eun, Chaboom, EK	PAE (패) feat. Nucksal, Deepflow	No	
777	Ep.5	Team Pf.	pH-1, Kid Milli, Loopy	Good Day feat. Paloalto	No	
777	Ep.6	1st Pf.	pH-1	Hate You feat. Woo Won-jae	No	
777	Ep.7	1st Pf.	OLNL	Breaking Bad (브레이킹배드) feat. Giriboy	No	
777	Ep.7	1st Pf.	Coogie	Damn Fate (빌어먹을 인연) feat. Sik-K	No	
777	Ep.7	1st Pf.	Keem Hyo-eun	XXL feat. Deepflow, Dok2	Yes	Neutral
777	Ep.7	1st Pf.	Nafla	Bite (물어)	No	
777	Ep.7	1st Pf.	Chaboom	When The Time Comes (죽어도 좋아) feat. Sunwoo Jung-a, Nucksal	N/A	
777	Ep.7	1st Pf.	Loopy	Save (Prod. Code Kunst) feat. Paloalto	No	
777	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Superbee	Hundred Million (억) feat. Changmo	No	
777	Ep.8	1st Pf.	ODEE	Airplane Mode (에어플레인모드) feat. Swings	Yes	Neutral
777	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Kid Milli	Change feat. GRAY	Yes	Negative

Attachments

777	Ep.8	1st Pf.	EK	GOD GOD GOD	No	
777	Ep.8	Extra	Nafra, pH-1, Kid Milli, OLNL, Loopy, Superbee	119	No	
777	Ep.9	Semi F.	Kid Milli	MOMM feat. JUSTHIS	No	
777	Ep.9	Semi F.	OLNL	i feat. Samuel Seo	No	
777	Ep.9	Semi F.	Superbee	SUPERBEEwhY (수퍼비와) feat. BewhY	Yes	Negative
777	Ep.9	Semi F.	Loopy	NoNo feat. Simon Dominic	Yes	Neutral
777	Ep.9	Semi F.	pH-1	Orange (주황색) feat. Jay Park	Yes	Positive
777	Ep.9	Semi F.	Nafra	SUNBBANG (선빵) feat. Gaeko, Giriboy	No	
777	Ep.10	Final	Kid Milli	Boss Thang feat. Young B	Yes	Neutral
777	Ep.10	Final	Loopy	Robot Love	No	
777	Ep.10	Final	Nafra	Buckle (버클) feat. Zico	No	
777	Ep.10	Final	Kid Milli	Goals feat. Paloalto, Hoody	No	
777	Ep.10	Final	Loopy	V feat. Loco	No	

777	Ep.10	Final	Nafla	Pickup Man (픽업맨) feat. Swings, Giriboy	Yes	Neutral
777	Ep.10	Extra	EK, ODEE, Zene The Zilla, Coogie	Guys (자식들) (Prod. The Quiett)	Yes	Negative
8	Ep.6	Team Pf.	Woodie Gochild, CHOILB, Seo Dong- hyun, Young B, Chillin Homie	BADA (바다) feat. Giriboy	No	
8	Ep.6	Team Pf.	YunB, Kim Seung- min, Yunhway, Donutman	Scoop (떨어) feat. Kid Milli, Swings	No	
8	Ep.6	Team Pf.	Punchnello, Jjangyou, Zene The Zilla, Mckdaddy	BAMN	No	
8	Ep.6	Team Pf.	Lil Tachi, Takuwa, Bryn, EK	00 (땡땡)	No	
8	Ep.8	Duo Pf.	YunB, Young B	Truman Show (트루먼 쇼)	No	
8	Ep.8	Duo Pf.	Woodie Gochild, Takuwa	PUNG (개성시대)	No	
8	Ep.8	Duo Pf.	Zene The Zilla, EK	24/7 (연중무휴)	No	
8	Ep.8	Duo Pf.	CHOILB, Kim Seung-min	Sangsu (상수)	No	
8	Ep.8	Duo Pf.	Punchnello, Donutman	Comfortable (편해)	Yes	Positive
8	Ep.8	Duo Pf.	Lil Tachi, Seo Dong-hyun	CCTV feat. Leellamarz	No	
8	Ep.8	Duo Pf.	Bryn, Mckdaddy	Bonnie & Clyde	No	

Attachments

8	Ep.8	Duo Pf.	Jjangyou, Yunhway	Gwangalli 101 (광안리101)	No	
8	Ep.9	1st Pf.	Seo Dong-hyun	Problems (문제) feat. Coogie	N/A	
8	Ep.9	1st Pf.	CHOILB	When It Rains (비가 와) (Prod. illusionsound1, Verbal Jint) feat. Suran	No	
8	Ep.9	1st Pf.	Young B	Sold Out feat. VINXEN	No	
8	Ep.9	1st Pf.	Punchnello	MAGMA feat. Hangzoo, BewhY	No	
8	Ep.9	1st Pf.	EK	Diablo feat. JUSTHIS	N/A	
8	Ep.9	1st Pf.	Jjangyou	Alone (혼자)	No	
8	Ep.9	1st Pf.	Takuwa	Bibbidi Bobbidi Boo (위로) feat. Han Yo-han	N/A	
8	Ep.10	Semi F.	Young B	Boy (소년) feat. BewhY	No	
8	Ep.10	Semi F.	Seo Dong-hyun	Phone Number (전화번호) feat. Giriboy	No	
8	Ep.10	Semi F.	Punchnello	Jungle (정글) feat. Penomeco, Sam Kim	No	
8	Ep.10	Semi F.	Takuwa	I'm Going (갈래) feat. Swings, Kid Milli	No	

8	Ep.10	Final	Young B	No Cap feat. Osshun Gum	Yes	Negative
8	Ep.10	Final	Punchnello	Sorry For Being Sorry (미안해서 미안해) feat. Kwon Jeong-yeol of 10cm	N/A	
8	N/A	Extra	Seo Dong-hyun	Astronaut (Prod. Oviz)	No	
8	N/A	Extra	Takuwa	Thank You (기역시웃) feat. Paloalto	N/A	
8	Ep.10	Extra	Zizo, Layone, Livur	Icebreaker (쇄빙선)	Yes	Negative
8	Ep.10	Extra	M1NU, Layone, Veinifyl, Seo Dong-hyun	Sick Teen (급SICK)	No	
8	Ep.10	Extra	Ahn Byung-woong, Chillin Homie, The Quiett	Let It Burn	No	
9	Ep.6	Team Pf.	Swings, Mckdaddy, Khakii, Layone	Want It (원해) feat. Paloalto	N/A	
9	Ep.6	Team Pf.	Heo Sung-hyun, dsel, Kaogaii, Untell	Win Win (원원) feat. Gaeko, Bewhy	No	
9	Ep.6	Team Pf.	Mirani, Munchman, Khundi Panda, Mushvenom	VVS feat. Justhis	Yes	Positive
9	Ep.6	Team Pf.	Lil Boi, Wonstein, Chillin Homie, Skyminhuk	Freak	Yes	Negative
9	Ep.7	1st Pf.	Untell	Peter Pan	No	

Attachments

9	Ep.7	1st Pf.	Swings	Upgrade 2020 feat. Paloalto	Yes	Neutral
9	Ep.7	1st Pf.	Kaogaii	Bakchigi (박치기) feat. Dynamic Duo	N/A	
9	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Layone	Mask On feat. Paloalto, Coogie	No	
9	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Skyminhyuk	Flashing (번쩍) feat. Han Yo-han, OLNL	N/A	
9	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Khundi Panda	The Roots (뿌리) feat. Justhis	No	
9	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Lil Boi	Tomorrow (내일이 오면) feat. Giriboy, Seo Dong-hyun	No	
9	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Mushvenom	Tricker (부어라 비워라)	Yes	Negative
9	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Wonstein	Infrared Camera (적외선 카메라)	Yes	Positive
9	Ep.9	Semi F.	Untell	Grain (결) feat. Dynamic Duo, Bewhy	No	
9	Ep.9	Semi F.	Mushvenom	Godok (고독하구만) feat. Superbee	N/A	
9	Ep.9	Semi F.	Layone	iii feat. Basick, Kid Milli, Paloalto	Yes	Positive
9	Ep.9	Semi F.	Wonstein	No Bad Dogs (세상에 나쁜 개는 없다) feat. Yang Dong- geun, Zion.T	N/A	

9	Ep.9	Semi F.	Lil Boi	Bad News Cypher vol. 2 feat. TakeOne	No	
9	Ep.9	Semi F.	Swings	Villain (악역) feat. Lee Hi, Simon Dominic	No	
9	Ep.9	Semi F.	Khundi Panda	Hero feat. Justhis, Golden	No	
9	Ep.10	Final	Mushvenom	Go (가다) feat. Simon Dominic, The Quiett	Yes	Negative
9	Ep.10	Final	Swings	B Mine feat. SUMIN	Yes	Positive
9	Ep.10	Final	Layone	Daydreamin feat. Sogumm, Woo Won-jae	No	
9	Ep.10	Final	Lil Boi	On Air feat. Loco, Jay Park, Gray	No	
9	Ep.10	Final	Mushvenom	The Beauty of Void (여백의 미) feat. Jessi, Justhis	N/A	
9	Ep.10	Final	Swings	Still Hungry feat. Mommy Son, Paloalto	No	
9	Ep.10	Final	Layone	Yay feat. Lee Young-ji, Jamie, Paloalto	No	
9	Ep.10	Final	Lil Boi	Credit feat. Yumdda, Giriboy, Zion.T	No	
9	Ep.10	Extra	Ahn Byung-woong, Khakii, Mckdaddy, Munchman	New New (뉴뉴)	No	
9	Ep.10	Extra	Rohann, Heo Sung-hyun, Lee Gi-wook, Khundi Panda, dsel	Y Earned (연말이 되면) feat. Gaeko, SOLE	N/A	

Attachments

10	Ep.6	Team Pf.	Don Mills, Northfacegawd, Sokodomo, Khakii, A-Chess	Trouble	N/A	
10	Ep.6	Team Pf.	Koonta, Basick, 365lit, Hwang Ji- sang, Song Min- young	Memories of You and Me (너와 나의 Memories) feat. Yumdda	No	
10	Ep.6	Team Pf.	Ourealgot, Since, Ahn Byeong- woong, Tabber, Jo Gwang-il	Wake Up feat. Gaeko	N/A	
10	Ep.6	Team Pf.	Anadelight, Unofficialboy, Be'O, Geegoin, Mudd the Student	Breathe (쉬어) feat. Mino	N/A	
10	Ep.7	1st Pf.	Sokodomo	Merry-Go-Round (회전목마) feat. Zion.T, Wonstein	No	
10	Ep.7	1st Pf.	Jo Gwang-il	Thorn (가시) feat. Gaeko, Justhis	No	
10	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Don Mills, Khakii	Chameleon (카멜레온) feat. Dbo, Sumin	No	
10	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Since, Tabber	Reset feat. Gaeko, Kid Milli	No	
10	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Hwang Ji-sang, 365lit	Wot Wot (모야모야) feat. Queen WaSabii	N/A	
10	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Geegoin, Anadelight	Press F5 (새로고침) feat. Gray	No	
10	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Basick	Meeting Is Easy, Parting Is Hard (만남은 쉽고 이별은 어려워) feat. Leellamarz	No	
10	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Mudd the Student	Moss (이끼) feat. Bobby	No	

10	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Koonta	Gganbu (깐부) feat. Yumdda, Ash Island	No	
10	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Be'O	Limousine (리무진) feat. Mino	Yes	Negative
10	Ep.9	Semi F.	Anandelight	High (높이) feat. Lee Hi	N/A	
10	Ep.9	Semi F.	Koonta	Hopefully (바래) feat. Jung In	No	
10	Ep.9	Semi F.	Mudd the Student	Dissonance (불협화음) feat. AKMU	No	
10	Ep.9	Semi F.	Basick	08Basick (08베이식) feat. Yumdda, Punchnello	No	
10	Ep.9	Semi F.	Jo Gwang-il	Waterbomb (호우주의) feat. Gaeko, Nucksal	No	
10	Ep.9	Semi F.	Sokodomo	Be ! feat. Paloalto, Lil Boi	No	
10	Ep.9	Semi F.	Be'O	MBTI feat. Coogie, Loco	N/A	
10	Ep.10	Final	Koonta	Double Up feat. Yumdda, Layone, Mushvenom, The Quiett	No	
10	Ep.10	Final	Be'O	Without You (네가 없는 밤) feat. Ash Island	No	
10	Ep.10	Final	Jo Gwang-il	Garion (가리온) (Prod. Primary) feat. Dynamic Duo	No	
10	Ep.10	Final	Koonta	Timing (타이밍) feat. Yumdda, Big Naughty	No	

Attachments

10	Ep.10	Final	Be'O	Nothing (지나고 보면) feat. Mino, Hwasa	Yes	Neutral
10	Ep.10	Final	Jo Gwang-il	Journey (쿠키영상) feat. Gaeko, Hangzoo, Ailee	No	
10	Ep.10	Extra	Basick, Anandelight, Mudd the Student, Sokodomo	A Long Day (고생이 많아) feat. Zion.T	No	
11	Ep.6	Team Pf.	Blase, Roh Yun-ha, Polodared, Chillin Homie, Fleeky Bang	We Higher (위하여) feat. Lil Boi	Yes	Positive
11	Ep.6	Team Pf.	Crucial Star, QM, Kim Jae-wook, NSW Yoon, Damini	Ajushi (아저씨) feat. Leellamarz	Yes	Positive
11	Ep.6	Team Pf.	Lee Young-ji, Toigo, J'Kyun, Jambino, Xinsayne	We feat. Jay Park	Yes	Neutral
11	Ep.6	Team Pf.	Don Malik, Huh, Khan, Mckdaddy, Los	My Way (마이웨이) feat. Justhis	Yes	Positive
11	Ep.7	1st Pf.	Roh Yun-ha	Flick feat. Be'O, Haon	No	
11	Ep.7	1st Pf.	QM	Come to My Stu feat. Leellamarz	No	
11	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Blase	Holiday feat. Lil Boi, Giriboy	No	
11	Ep.8	1st Pf.	NSW Yoon	Eri Eri (으리으리) feat. Homies	Yes	Neutral
11	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Toigo	Blue Check feat. Jay Park, Jessi	Yes	Positive
11	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Khan	Compass (나침반) feat. Uneducated Kid, Superbee	No	

11	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Jambino	Bingo feat. meenoi, George	No	
11	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Huh	Burn Up (펼펼) feat. Dynamic Duo	No	
11	Ep.8	1st Pf.	Don Malik	Eye (눈) feat. Big Naughty, Justhis	Yes	Neutral
11	Ep.9	Semi F.	Roh Yun-ha	Vroom feat. Lil Boi, Swings	No	
11	Ep.9	Semi F.	Huh	Ugly Duckling (미운 오리 새끼) feat. Sunwoo Jung-a, Bobby	No	
11	Ep.9	Semi F.	Blase	Name Tag feat. Sik-K, Coogie	No	
11	Ep.9	Semi F.	Khan	Goblin (도깨비) feat. Homies	No	
11	Ep.9	Semi F.	Don Malik	Ppak (뽀) feat. Justhis, Paloalto	No	
11	Ep.9	Semi F.	Jambino	Like Water feat. Loco, Hyuna	N/A	
11	Ep.9	Semi F.	NSW Yoon	Love feat. Paul Blanco, Ash Island	Yes	Positive
11	Ep.10	Final	Don Malik	Original feat. Sion	No	
11	Ep.10	Final	Blase	Chosen 1	Yes	Positive

Attachments

11	Ep.10	Final	Huh	See You! feat. Sole	No	
11	Ep.10	Final	Don Malik	Bathtub (욕조) feat. Wheein, Justhis	No	
11	Ep.10	Final	Blase	Diamonds feat. Lil Boi, Spray	Yes	Positive
11	Ep.10	Final	Huh	Way Up feat. Camo, Justhis	Yes	Neutral
11	Ep.10	Extra	Chillin Homie, Roh Yun-ha, Fleeky Bang, Khan	Go	No	

7.2 High School Rapper Song Table

Season	Episode	Round	Rapper	Song	References women	Connotation
1	Ep.5	Team Pf.	Jo Won-woo, Jung In-seol & Lee Dong-min	"Seoul Caliber" (서울구경) feat. Deepflow	No	
1	Ep.5	Team Pf.	Choi Seo-hyun, Hwang In-woong, Lee Ki-hoon	"Jintobaegi" (진또배기) feat. YDG	Yes	Neutral
1	Ep.6	1st Pf.	Kim Dong-hyun	"I'm Good" feat. Jessi	Yes	Neutral
1	Ep.6	1st Pf.	Kim Sun-jae	"Bully" feat. Mad Clown	Yes	Positive

1	Ep.6	1st Pf.	Yang Hong-won	"Bunzi" feat. Giriboy	Yes	Neutral
1	Ep.6	1st Pf.	Choi Ha-min	"Naw Mean" feat. Swings	Yes	Positive
1	Ep.8	Final	Lee Dong-min	"The Boy with Glory" feat. Don Mills & G2	No	
1	Ep.8	Final	Kim Sun-jae	"Bell" feat. Hyolin	No	
1	Ep.8	Final	Kim Kyu-heon	"Star" feat. Jessi & Babylon	No	
1	Ep.8	Final	Mark	"Drop" feat. Seulgi	No	
1	Ep.8	Final	Choi Ha-min	"Come for you" feat. Homeboy & FNRL	Yes	Neutral
1	Ep.8	Final	Jo Won-woo	"Home" feat. Samuel Seo & Nucksal	Yes	Positive
1	Ep.8	Final	Yang Hong-won	"Better Man" feat. Crucial Star	Yes	Positive
1	Ep.8	Extra	Yang Hong-won	"Rhyme Travel" feat. Tiger JK	No	
2	Ep.4	Duo Pf.	Geunsu, Jowonu	"Mask Off" (껍데기는 가)	No	
2	Ep.4	Duo Pf.	Rohann, Oh Dam Ryul	"Asian Drum" (북)	No	
2	Ep.5	Duo Pf.	A.mond, Yenjamin	"Buddy-Buddy" (오성과 한음)	No	
2	Ep.5	Duo Pf.	Haon, Pullik	"The Little Prince" (어린 왕자)	Yes	Neutral

Attachments

2	Ep.5	1st Pf.	Bully Da Bastard	"Rain" (비) feat. Deepflow	No	
2	Ep.5	1st Pf.	Webster B, Ash Island	"Like It" feat. Hangzoo, Boi B	No	
2	Ep.6	1st Pf.	Pullik	"Madmax" feat. Woodie Gochild	No	
2	Ep.6	1st Pf.	Oh Dam Ryul	"Young Wave" feat. Hangzoo, Boi B	No	
2	Ep.6	1st Pf.	Geunsu, A.mond	"Santah Claus" feat. San E, Cheetah	No	
2	Ep.6	1st Pf.	Yenjamin, Jowonu	"Break Time"	No	
2	Ep.6	1st Pf.	Young Sice	"March"	No	
2	Ep.6	1st Pf.	Haon, Vinxen	"Bar Code" (바코드)	Yes	Neutral
2	Ep.7	Semi F.	A.mond	"Good Boy Syndrome" (착한 아이 증후군)	No	
2	Ep.7	Semi F.	Pullik	"Take Off"	No	
2	Ep.7	Semi F.	Yenjamin	"Movement"	Yes	Positive
2	Ep.7	Semi F.	Bully Da Bastard	"Alone" (혼자)	Yes	Neutral
2	Ep.7	Semi F.	Ash Island	"Night Vibe (Remake)"	No	
2	Ep.7	Semi F.	Geunsu	"On The Tree" feat. A.mond	Yes	Neutral

2	Ep.7	Semi F.	Jowonu	"What Time"	No	
2	Ep.7	Semi F.	Vinxen	"Cause" (탓)	Yes	Negative
2	Ep.7	Semi F.	Rohann	"Aim" (지향)	No	
2	Ep.7	Semi F.	Haon	"Adios"	Yes	Neutral
2	Ep.8	Final	Haon	"Boong-Boong" (붕붕) feat. Sik-K	No	
2	Ep.8	Final	Rohann	"Lee Ro-han" (이로한) feat. Elo, Jessi	Yes	Positive
2	Ep.8	Final	Vinxen	"Not At All" (전혀) feat. Woo	Yes	Positive
2	Ep.8	Final	Ash Island	"Yaho" feat. Geegoin, Hangzoo	No	
2	Ep.8	Final	Jowonu	"053" feat. Hanhae	No	
2	Ep.8	Extra	Young Sice, Sandy, Bully Da Bastard, A.mond, Oh Dam Ryul	"Look"	Yes	Positive
2	Ep.8	Extra	Jowonu, Rohann, Haon, Ash Island, Vinxen	"Mi Color"	Yes	Neutral
2	Ep.8	Extra	Haon	"Graduation" feat. Vinxen, Rohann	No	
3	Ep.4	Duo Pf.	Aquinas, Siga A	"Blue Whale" (고래를 위하여)	No	
3	Ep.4	Duo Pf.	Sokodomo, Untell	"Mirror" (거울)	No	

Attachments

3	Ep.4	Duo Pf.	Lil Tachi, Hotchkiss	"Snow" (눈)	Yes	Negative
3	Ep.4	Duo Pf.	Young Kay, Gist	"Wishing On A Star" (별 헤는 밤)	Yes	Neutral
3	Ep.4	Duo Pf.	Tang The Awesome, BlueWhale	"Wing Wing" (갈매기의 꿈)	No	
3	Ep.5	Duo Pf.	Itownkid, Goi	"Ggggwung" (굉)	No	
3	Ep.5	Duo Pf.	Pluma, Lee Young- ji	"Orange Tree" (오렌지 나무)	No	
3	Ep.5	Duo Pf.	Nerdboi, Sandy	"Metamorphosis" (변신)	No	
3	Ep.5	1st Pf.	Aquinas, Itownkid	"Cheat Sheet" (컨닝페이퍼) feat. Hangzoo	Yes	Neutral
3	Ep.5	1st Pf.	Tang The Awesome	"I'm Handsome" (생긴 대로 살아) feat. Giriboy	Yes	Neutral
3	Ep.6	1st Pf.	Siga A	"Cowboy" feat. Boi B	No	
3	Ep.6	1st Pf.	Pluma	"How You Doin'?" (요즘 어때) feat. The Quiett	Yes	Positive
3	Ep.6	1st Pf.	Lil Tachi, BlueWhale	"Camouflage" (카모플라쥬) feat. Kid Milli	No	
3	Ep.6	1st Pf.	Sokodomo, Lee Young-ji	"U.F.O" feat. Uneducated Kid	Yes	Neutral
3	Ep.6	1st Pf.	Young Kay	"G.O" feat. Keem Hyo-eun	Yes	Neutral
3	Ep.6	1st Pf.	Itownkid	"Gofidem" (꿀) feat. Chillin Homie	No	

3	Ep.7	Semi F.	Aquinas	"Prophecy" (예언)	No	
3	Ep.7	Semi F.	BlueWhale	"Drama"	Yes	Positive
3	Ep.7	Semi F.	Lil Tachi	"Dogsick" feat. No:el	Yes	Negative
3	Ep.7	Semi F.	Siga A	"Mouth Mask" (입에 마스크) feat. Hangzoo, Webster B	No	
3	Ep.7	Semi F.	Tang The Awesome	"Dandy" (멋쟁이) feat. Han Yo-han	No	
3	Ep.7	Semi F.	Sokodomo	"Freedumb" feat. Haon	Yes	Positive
3	Ep.8	Final	Aquinas	"Popcorn" (팝콘) feat. Penomeco, Youra	No	
3	Ep.8	Final	BlueWhale	"My Way" (내 맘대로) feat. Giriboy, Punchnello	No	
3	Ep.8	Final	Siga A	"Jang Won Geup Jae" (장원급제) feat. Boi B, Owen Ovadoz	No	
3	Ep.8	Final	Tang The Awesome	"8" (그들) feat. Agee Expression, MoonMean	No	
3	Ep.8	Final	Sokodomo	"Global Extinction" (지구멸망) feat. Kirin	No	
3	Ep.8	Final	Young Kay	"Here" feat. Vinxen	No	
3	Ep.8	Extra	Hotchkiss, Gist, Goi, Untell	"Winner"	No	
4	Ep.6	Team Pf.	H3hyeon, Jaeha, Obiegogle, Choo	"Elizabeth" (엘리자베스)	Yes	Positive

Attachments

4	Ep.6	Team Pf.	Roh Yunha, YoBoy, Heo Won-hyuk, Lil Nekh	"Big Big Big" feat. Simon Dominic	No	
4	Ep.6	Team Pf.	Yung Chens, Trade L, Baggie, D.Ark	"Backpack" feat. Changmo	No	
4	Ep.6	Team Pf.	Park Hyeon-jin, Lil Bemo, YLN Foreign, Pluma	"Green Light" feat. Jay Park, PH-1	No	
4	Ep.7	Duo Pf.	Roh Yunha, YoBoy	"Methane Hydrate" (녹아줄게)	Yes	Positive
4	Ep.7	Duo Pf.	D.Ark, Baggie	"Numbers Of Cases" (경우의 수) feat. Changmo	Yes	Positive
4	Ep.7	Duo Pf.	Lil Bemo, Park Hyeon-jin	"Work!"	Yes	Positive
4	Ep.7	Duo Pf.	H3hyeon, Jaeha	"Chris Brown Moves"	Yes	Neutral
4	Ep.7	Duo Pf.	Lil Nekh, Heo Won-hyuk	"Emoji" (이모티콘)	Yes	Positive
4	Ep.7	Duo Pf.	Trade L, Yung Chens	"Jeon Woochi" (전우치) feat. Changmo	No	
4	Ep.8	Duo Pf.	Choo	"Choo Religion" (추 Religion) feat. Yumdda	Yes	Neutral
4	Ep.8	Duo Pf.	YLN Foreign	"DNA" feat. Jay Park	No	
4	Ep.8	Semi F.	Heo Won-hyuk	"Meu Tempo" feat. Bibi, Simon Dominic	Yes	Positive
4	Ep.8	Semi F.	Baggie	"Kiri Kiri" (끼리끼리)	No	
4	Ep.8	Semi F.	D.Ark	"Cold" feat. Superbee	Yes	Positive

4	Ep.8	Semi F.	Roh Yunha	"Bow Wow" (왁왁) feat. Blase, Coogie, Simon Dominic	No	
4	Ep.9	Semi F.	YLN Foreign	"Call Me" feat. Sogumm	Yes	Positive
4	Ep.9	Semi F.	Lil Nekh	"Red Light" feat. Big Naughty	Yes	Positive
4	Ep.9	Semi F.	Jaeha	"I'm Fine" feat. Yumdda	Yes	Negative
4	Ep.9	Semi F.	Park Hyeon-jin	"Paradise" feat. Meenoi	No	
4	Ep.9	Semi F.	Lil Bemo	"Island Boys" feat. Sokodomo, PH-1	No	
4	Ep.9	Semi F.	Trade L	"Supernova" feat. Changmo, GSoul, Dut2	Yes	Negative
4	Ep.10	Final	Park Hyun-jin	"Intro" feat. Jay Park	No	
4	Ep.10	Final	D.Ark	"Do My Best" feat. Jessi	No	
4	Ep.10	Final	Roh Yunha	"Self-Check" feat. Nucksal	Yes	Neutral
4	Ep.10	Final	Lil Nekh	"Naro" (나로호) feat. Loco, Simon Dominic	Yes	Positive
4	Ep.10	Final	Trade L	"Ooh Wah" feat. Changmo, Wonstein	No	