

Copyright © 2026 Criminal Productions. All rights reserved. This text may not be published online or distributed without written permission. Transcripts are generated using a combination of speech recognition software and human transcribers, and may contain errors. Please check the corresponding audio before quoting in print.

Episode 144: Sun-Man
Air Date: August 19, 2026

PHOEBE JUDGE: (As narrator) Hi. It's Phoebe. Today, we wanted to share an episode we really love. It first came out in 2023. And when I first heard the story, I remember thinking, I want one of those.

PHOEBE JUDGE: Can you describe what He-Man looks like?

YLA EASON: OK. He-Man-- extremely muscular, huge biceps and thighs and legs, and in a tiny Speedo-type undergarment, if you will, or outfit, costume, and a breastplate, an armor breastplate that looked like something from Viking era, and shoulder-length blond hair.

PHOEBE JUDGE: A muscled white guy?

YLA EASON: Yep. Yep. Yep. Muscle, Viking-ish, white guy.

PHOEBE JUDGE: (As narrator) This is Yla Eason. Her son, Menelik, was born in New York City in 1981.

YLA EASON: I don't know where he developed this superhero toy fascination. It might have been in nursery school. It may have been with some of his other friends. But he was totally into them. I can also remember one of his first multisyllabic word was "collection," as in get the whole collection.

And I really couldn't figure that out because we didn't have a television. We didn't have a television for the first three years of his life. And the only reason we got one was the neighbors told us that we would never get a babysitter-- we'd never get a teenage babysitter if we didn't get a television.

PHOEBE JUDGE: (As narrator) In the early 1980s, there were plenty of superhero toys and cartoons on TV shows like *Spider-Man and His Amazing Friends* and *Super Friends,* which featured a mix of characters like Superman, Wonder Woman, and Batman. And there was Menelik's favorite, *He-Man and Masters of the Universe.*

YLA EASON: And I think he was into He-Man because one of his favorite movies back then was-- VHS movies-- was *Conan the Barbarian,* when Arnold Schwarzenegger was still in loincloth, running around with long hair. He loved that. I mean, we had to watch that over and over and over. I was never into those kinds of movies. But I think the whole bigger-than-life hero, conquering the world, I think that kind of fit into his imagination.

PHOEBE JUDGE: (As narrator) In 1984, when Menelik was 3, their family went on a vacation.

YLA EASON: It was right before Christmas. We were in Jamaica, on the beach, and he was playing in the sand. I think there was another kid there. You know how you meet kids who are also there on vacation with their parents? And he was playing with the toy. And I think I said something like, oh, you could be a superhero too, like He-Man. And he looked up at me with just the most serious expression on his face. And he said, no, I can't be a superhero because I'm not white.

And I was taken aback by that. And I was like, oh, well, yes, you can. In fact, we'll get you a Black superhero when we get back to Brooklyn. And he just kind of looked in what I perceived as kind of a skeptical glance that he gave me, as if like, yeah, OK, and he went back to playing. Here's a 3-year-old kid saying that his imagination is limited because of his skin color.

Now, remember, toys are just pure fantasy. Whatever you want to think about a toy, however you want to be in a toy, whatever world you want to create, you're totally allowed to do that because it is a toy. Therefore, you're completely at play. So I was shocked when he said that, and, quite frankly, frightened, because I felt as if some form of limitation had suddenly swept into his head at such a young age because of his skin color. And that was frightening.

PHOEBE JUDGE: (As narrator) When Yla got back to Brooklyn, she started looking for a Black superhero toy for Menelik.

YLA EASON: This was before the internet, so I couldn't go search for it. I went to stores. I talked to a lot of mothers. I asked a lot of questions. I asked people in the stores. I looked through the entire Mattel's superhero line, looking for a character, just assuming, I think, at the time-- maybe not in '85, but they had more than 50 or 40 characters. Some were bad guys, but they had lots of characters. In fact, two of the characters of color who were Asian at the time, they actually were bad guys. So there weren't any good guys to point to whose skin was not white.

PHOEBE JUDGE: So what did you do next?

YLA EASON: Well, what's that old saying? Invention is the motherhood, or motherhood is the invention of something. Anyway, what's a mother to do? You're going to try to solve the problem. So I said, OK. Can't find one. Have completely exhausted finding one. We'll make one.

PHOEBE JUDGE: (As narrator) I'm Phoebe Judge, and *This is Love.*

[MUSIC PLAYING]

YLA EASON: I had no idea what I was doing. I didn't know anything about the toy industry, so therefore I did not know it was a difficult, closed kind of industry to walk into, where everybody knew everybody. And so I found out how difficult it would be when I found out how very expensive it is to make a mold. You've got to make a mold. You've got to find a manufacturer. You've got to do the packaging.

So basically, the beginning was going to be about $60,000 to get everything done-- and mind you, that kind of money back in '85. But again, I wasn't daunted by the thought, because it just seemed like, OK, let's go raise the money. That was before GoFundMe, et cetera. But let's find people who will help us do this, because we can't be the only people who would like to see a Black superhero toy.

PHOEBE JUDGE: (As narrator) Yla Eason had gone to business school in the '70s and worked as an editor at a finance magazine, but she'd never owned a business before.

PHOEBE JUDGE: Did you have an idea of what you wanted the toy to look like in your mind?

YLA EASON: Oh, yes. Yes. The first thing I wanted was for it to look like it was a part of the *He-Man* line. It's a concept in the toy industry called fit into play. It's like if you design a girl's toy and you want her to be a part of *Barbie,* then you've got to make sure she can wear Barbie's clothes and fit in Barbie's vehicles, et cetera. So I had that same idea that he's got to be the exact same size as the *He-Man* toys, so that when a kid sees it, it's like, oh, this must be a part of this line. Same kind of muscular figure. Same form of articulation. So that was the first thought.

And then I also knew that because the issues that my son was having were related to skin color, that he had to be brown, and that his powers were going to come from his skin. That was another concept that I had, that I was going to make his skin powerful, and started reading more about that and found out melanin is what makes our skin darker.

And that would be one of his superpowers, his melanin, and that his facial characteristics-- everybody was wearing small afros back then. He'd have a little Afro. And that his features-- he would not look like some of the Black dolls, which looked like white dolls that had just been dipped in chocolate, if you will, that he would have-- his phenotype would be African, his nose, his lips, that he would actually look like a Black man. So when kids looked at him, they could see themselves in him.

PHOEBE JUDGE: (As narrator) Yla Eason says around this time, she was introduced to Dr. Kenneth Clark. Dr. Clark along with his wife, Dr. Mamie Clark, were Black psychologists who conducted a famous series of experiments in the 1940s that included something called the doll test.

In the doll test, they showed young Black children four baby dolls. Many of the children attended segregated schools. Two of the dolls had white skin with yellow hair, and two had brown skin with black hair. Researchers would then ask the child to identify the dolls' race, to hand them the doll they wanted to play with the most, and also to hand them the doll that was, quote, "nice" or, quote, "looks bad."

Most of the Black children said they wanted to play with the white doll with yellow hair and said the white dolls were the, quote, "nice ones." 59% of the children said that the Black dolls looked, quote, "bad." Dr. Kenneth Clark, talked about the doll test in a 1985 interview for the docuseries *Eyes on the Prize.*

KENNETH CLARK: The most disturbing question, and one that really made me, even as a scientist, upset was-- we then asked as the final question, now, show me the doll that's most like you. And it was disturbing because many of the children were emotionally upset at having to identify with a doll that they had rejected. Some of them would walk out the room or refuse to answer that question.

PHOEBE JUDGE: (As narrator) The 1954 Supreme Court ruling in *Brown versus Board of Education,* which struck down school segregation, was influenced in part by the findings of the Clark study. Chief Justice Earl Warren wrote in his decision that to separate Black children, quote, "solely because of their race, generates a feeling of inferiority that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone."

YLA EASON: They were showing that separate but equal was still making Black kids feel inferior and not worthy. So Dr. Clark explained to me, when kids can't see themselves in a toy, in a product, they can't then see themselves as powerful or important. And so that added more weight to me or focus in terms of, wow, toys are much deeper than I ever thought they were.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

PHOEBE JUDGE: (As narrator) We'll be right back. To listen without ads, join Criminal Plus.

In the early 1900s, a formerly enslaved man named Richard Henry Boyd decided to start a doll company that would make Black dolls. His company is believed to be the first Black doll company in the US. Richard Henry Boyd's dolls were different from the Black dolls that had been made by white-owned companies. Those dolls were often modeled on racist caricatures.

And as one researcher wrote, quote, "19th century doll manufacturers invited enactments of racial violence when they made Black dolls of materials, especially rubber and cloth, that could withstand rough usage." Richard Henry Boyd's Black dolls were made of porcelain. They wore dresses with lace and ribbons.

An early ad for the dolls read, "These toys are not made of that disgraceful and humiliating type that we've been accustomed to seeing Black dolls made of." A 1909 Christmas ad in the *Nashville Globe* read, "The children are now clamoring for dolls that will resemble themselves."

There were other Black dolls introduced in the following years, like a doll named Patty Jo, who was released in the 1940s. She was based on a cartoon created by Jackie Ormes, one of the first Black female syndicated cartoonists in the US. Mattel released Black dolls that were friends of Barbie in the late 1960s, including Talking Christie, who talked when you pulled a cord. And in 1980, Mattel released Black Barbie, who was created by Mattel designer Kitty Black Perkins.

PHOEBE JUDGE: When you were in Jamaica and you thought, we'll get you an action figure who's Black when we get back, did you expect that this would be an easy thing to do, that, yeah, of course, you'd find one somewhere?

YLA EASON: Sure did. Sure did. Why wouldn't there be?

PHOEBE JUDGE: Why don't you think that there were those toys at that point? There was the Black Barbie. Why not an action figure superhero?

YLA EASON: It's a really interesting question. I have thought about it some. When it's a girls' toy-- and I'm being very traditional. We'll go back to in 1985. Girls' toys focus on hair play, nurturing, caring, giving, and fashion, dressing up, being, quote, unquote, "a girly girl."

Boys' toys, same time period, '80s, boys' toys-- and if you think about them now, you'll know that what I'm telling you is true. Never should boys' toys have real hair-- or play hair that you can comb. Boys are not to comb hair, OK? Boys' toys, all their clothing is to be plastic. If they have any clothing at all, it's to be a cape. They are never to dress and undress a toy, because they aren't supposed to be nurturing. They are supposed to be playing power moves. They're supposed to be winning and losing. They're supposed to be in combat.

Now, let's overlay, in America, certain forms of racism or certain forms of inequality, or certain forms of what you ascribe to a Black boy that you don't perhaps ascribe to a white boy. Then maybe you don't want a conqueror Black boy toy. You don't want that. Maybe that's threatening. Maybe you don't want him to beat up a white boy. Because what does that mean? Oh, he won the race. Of course, none of this makes sense. But I'm just telling you, those kinds of thoughts, I hate to say it, but they're probably kind of unconsciously played into the boys' toy arena.

PHOEBE JUDGE: (As narrator) Yla Eason decided to name her toy Sun-Man. Now she needed an artist who could bring her vision of him to life. Her cousin was dating a man named Floyd Cooper.

YLA EASON: He drew the first illustrations. And they required you to draw a view from the head, from the bottom, from the feet, left, right, front, and center. But you had to freehand draw all of that back then.

PHOEBE JUDGE: (As narrator) Floyd Cooper later went on to become a well-known children's book illustrator who illustrated books about Black historical figures, like Billie Holiday and Rosa Parks. Sun-Man's outfit was similar in design to He-Man's, green and black superhero shorts and red boots. He has yellow wings, a red chestplate with a sunburst on it, red armbands, and a sword and shield. The colors that Yla chose were a nod to their trip to Jamaica.

YLA EASON: So he has some of the Rastafarian colors, if you will, the yellow, the red, and the green, on his shield. He has green and black on his pants because there's also the liberation flag, the African liberation flag, which is red, green, and yellow.

PHOEBE JUDGE: When Menelik first got his hands on a Sun-Man toy, what did he think?

YLA EASON: Well, he was able to see the toy in development. He was excited. He had several perceptions or he had several images of it as it was going into development. But I can tell you what I think-- it really showed me how excited he was.

And what he was really thinking was we were-- I was picking him up from nursery school one day. And when I got there, all the little kids swarmed all around me. And they were all giggling and yelling and being noisy, but all clumped around me. And I was like, what's going on here? And they said, Menelik told us you can get us any toy that we want. So that told me he was very proud and that he, I guess, had assumed that all you have to do is ask for it and you'll get it.

PHOEBE JUDGE: (As narrator) Yla Eason finally had a Black superhero toy for her son, but now she needed to find a way to get Sun-Man in front of other kids. Yla says, at first, stores were not very receptive.

YLA EASON: It would be like going to a country club golf course, where you had to pass a membership and pay a fee, and then everyone knew everybody once you got inside the country club. People don't know this, but the toy industry was very much that way, especially in 1985. People knew each other, and many of them were related to each other in the industry.

So here I was, an outsider. Not only that, I'd never worked in a toy company. So I didn't have the benefit of, oh, yes, she's worked for us over here. So she's cool. Let her in. I did not have the benefit of that. I walked into a closed club that I was not aware of. I had no way of knowing that.

I also didn't know how difficult-- I should have-- it is to get shelf space. Shelf space is a premium. You've got major companies fighting for it on a regular basis. And back then, there was no such thing on the store shelves of multicultural marketing. The only marketing that was being done, quote, unquote, "ethnically" was hair care products, skin care products that were just coming out, as well as, let's say, dark pantyhose that were now catering to you because of either the texture of your hair or the color of your skin that was specific to who you were. And let's get products in that cater to that.

Toys were not seen in any way, shape, or form as a part of that cultural mix, if you will. So I'm also asking a toy buyer to buy something from me, who they've never seen before. They've never had an ethnic toy. They've never catered toys specifically to anybody of color.

So A, who are you? What are you talking about? And as one toy buyer told me, if you really had anything, Mattel would have already done it. So it was like, who are you? Get out of here. We don't need you. And we don't even think you're going to be successful. So why waste our time?

PHOEBE JUDGE: (As narrator) So she decided to take a different approach and marketed her toys directly to the people who she thought might buy them.

YLA EASON: Beauty shops, barber shops, churches, clubs, organizations, people fundraising for the NAACP, people fundraising for the Urban League, people who worked at the post office, who had a side hustle of selling things, street vendors, that was my market.

PHOEBE JUDGE: (As narrator) Yla it took out an ad in *Ebony* magazine. It featured a full-page picture of Sun-Man next to his nemesis, a character named Pig-Head. The ad read, "More powerful than Spider-Man. More awesome than Superman. Mightier than He-Man. Sun-Man, the greatest superhero of them all." One little boy outside of Cleveland saw that ad.

RASHAD REED: I just remember my mom running, rushing to me, showing me a little article about a figure that looked like He-Man, but he was Black.

PHOEBE JUDGE: (As narrator) Rashad Reed is 43 now. He still lives near where he grew up. He was 6 when his mother showed him the ad for Sun-Man in *Ebony.*

RASHAD REED: And she was just excited. Oh, you're going to have to have this. You're going to have to get this. You need this for your little play battles that you have. He can be your leader. And I just remember staring at that page-- I'm not even sure if it was a prototype-- and just-- yes, I can't wait to get that. Can't wait to get that.

PHOEBE JUDGE: (As narrator) Rashad remembers his mother drove an hour to get the Sun-Man toys.

RASHAD REED: We needed representation. It's fine for you to be a sidekick. But also, it's nothing wrong with you being the leader. And seeing that, playing with that physically, I mean, it helps build up your confidence. It definitely do. Because ever since that day that I received Sun-Man and Pig-Head, they were the leaders of my battles. They showed me, I can lead. I can be somebody important. So he kind of just took the place of He-Man.

PHOEBE JUDGE: [CHUCKLES] Who needs He-Man?

RASHAD REED: Not to say I did not just discard it, He-Man, or anything, but he just kind of outranked him once he came into the fold.

PHOEBE JUDGE: So Sun-Man became your favorite toy?

RASHAD REED: Oh, definitely. Definitely.

PHOEBE JUDGE: (As narrator) Yla Eason's company grew. She was spending more and more time on her business. Eventually, she quit her day job as an editor. Her company, Olmec Toys, started producing more toys. They added more characters to the Rulers of the Sun line who were Hispanic, Asian, and Native American. And they created a line of Black women superheroes that were similar to She-Ra action figures.

They also made the Bronze Bombers, a line of action figures inspired by a Black infantry regiment in World War I, and included a Black woman code breaker in the toy collection. And they released the first official collectible figures of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X.

YLA EASON: At some point, mid '90s, the toy industry did basically say, hey, we need to represent-- I think it was when multiculturalism became in. That's when I think the toy industry started thinking beyond just the kids that they were selling to, that we should be representing everybody.

PHOEBE JUDGE: (As narrator) By 1998, Yla Eason's company was selling their toys in Kmart, Toys R Us, and Walmart. She says they didn't have enough money to be in continuous production. They couldn't keep their products on the shelves.

YLA EASON: And that started hurting my business. That then created competition. And then other competitors came in, and the business started going down. One thing I wasn't prepared for was success can kill you.

PHOEBE JUDGE: (As narrator) Yla's company shut down.

YLA EASON: But it wasn't from lack of demand, just that I couldn't satisfy it.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

PHOEBE JUDGE: (As narrator) We'll be right back.

PHOEBE JUDGE: Why don't we just start with you introducing yourself?

ED DUNCAN: Well, my name is Ed Duncan, and I am the senior vice president of design at Mattel over the categories of action figures, plush toys, games. And I'm also over inventor relations for all Mattel.

PHOEBE JUDGE: Do you think if you told-- I mean, when you tell kids your job, they must just be-- this must seem like a dream.

ED DUNCAN: I think kids have a hard time wrapping their head around that as a job. But at any party or anything I'm at, I kind of win the "What do you do?" contest.

PHOEBE JUDGE: (As narrator) Ed Duncan has been designing toys since the '90s. He got his start at Fisher-Price. And he's also worked at Disney and Hasbro.

ED DUNCAN: You get to where I am by never really stopping playing with toys. So I was always fascinated by them, not just as playthings, but as pieces of design. Like, I look back to the way I looked at some of the toys I had, and I was really into how they were put together and how they worked and things like that.

PHOEBE JUDGE: As a toy designer in the '90s, starting out in the '90s, did you, yourself, find that there was a lack of Black characters in the line of work and in this kind of superhero work that you were doing?

ED DUNCAN: Yeah. Absolutely. I mean, toy design as a career path is strikingly devoid of Black people. It's absolutely disproportional how few Black people end up toy designers in America. I've been a toy designer for nearly 30 years, and I'm pretty sure I haven't met 10 Black toy designers in the 30 years. As I think about it, I can get to maybe seven. It's just super uncommon.

PHOEBE JUDGE: Why? Why do you think?

ED DUNCAN: I think it's what appears to be a frivolous pursuit. I remember, when I went to arts and design school, my parents supported me, but there was definitely a hint of reservation coming from my mom. And years later, after I had started to have some success, she pulled me aside and apologized for just really just being skeptical that this was ever going to have a return on the investment. I think you still are in a point where it's not so given that Black people are going to go to college and get degrees. And so it's treated as something that you can't waste the shot on it.

PHOEBE JUDGE: (As narrator) In 2020, Ed Duncan was working on reviving one of Mattel's brands from the '80s, *He-Man and Masters of the Universe.*

ED DUNCAN: And as you get into He-Man, especially as a Black man, you start to realize there's not a lot of diversity in the line. And it's interesting, because Mattel's first action figure line in the '60s was a line called Major Matt Mason that was about a group of astronauts. And it was pre-landing on the moon, kind of picking up on the space race. And you have four human figures in that line, and one of them is a Black male. In 1966, we made a Black male astronaut.

But for some reason, *Masters of the Universe* actually stands out with its lack of diversity. And you get almost 65 figures into the line and towards the end of the run before you have a Black figure show up in the line. And so as I'm making this line viable for relaunch, this starts to become a real obvious challenge that we would need to find a solution for.

PHOEBE JUDGE: (As narrator) The one Black character in *Masters of the Universe* was introduced about a year after Yla Eason created Sun-Man. The action figure's name was Clamp Champ. He has a removable claw arm. Ed knew that earlier in the 1980s, other companies had made toys similar to He-Man. And he started looking around on the internet for ideas.

ED DUNCAN: And I came across the Sun-Man story. And I was reading it, and I'm like, oh, this is really interesting.

PHOEBE JUDGE: (As narrator) He decided to reach out to Yla, who by then was teaching at Rutgers Business School.

ED DUNCAN: And I'm a businessman. I've got a LinkedIn page. So I reached out to her. And I just dropped her a note, and I said, hey, not for nothing, but I'm a fan of your work.

YLA EASON: He was like, I wanted you to know that I think you did a great job, what you did, introducing Sun-Man back then.

ED DUNCAN: And she responded, and we started chatting back and forth.

PHOEBE JUDGE: (As narrator) By then, it was the summer of 2020. Black Lives Matter protests were happening across the country.

ED DUNCAN: Between the conversations with Yla and everything that was going on in the world around me, I started to realize that I have some interesting defense mechanisms that I didn't really notice I was doing. And one of the things that I was doing, and I think I still do-- if you look at my LinkedIn, it still does this-- is the picture on my LinkedIn isn't a picture of me. It's a picture of a toy from my purview. It might be a picture of He-Man right now, but it's always been a toy relative to me versus an actual picture of me, a Black man.

And so when I reached out to Yla, it wasn't a conscious thing I was doing. So she gets this outreach, and it's from this person that is not clearly putting themselves out as being Black. And so she's responding to it as, oh, somebody from Mattel is reaching out to me. That's very interesting. And then we have a little exchange on a couple of emails. And I'm like, well, why don't we get on a video call and chat? And when we got on the video call, she was stunned to see that I was Black.

And I didn't really think about that before the setup, because I'm doing this weird masking of myself. And she just couldn't stop talking about the irony of the situation where Mattel, at the time, was being at least careless in their lack of diversity in the *Masters of the Universe* line and just not seeing the need for such things. And then fast-forward to now and the head of design for this category and the person running He-Man is actually a Black man. And she just found that enormously fascinating.

YLA EASON: Full circle, rather deliciously ironic.

ED DUNCAN: As we talked, I admitted-- I go, I don't really have any plan here, but I would be lying if I said that it hadn't crossed my mind that, wouldn't it be neat if Sun-Man somehow entered the world of He-Man and they were able to shake hands someday?

PHOEBE JUDGE: (As narrator) Starting in 2021, Mattel began making Sun-Man toys. They released them alongside He-Man as part of the 40th anniversary *Masters of the Universe* collection.

PHOEBE JUDGE: Did you have to create a story about how Sun-Man fits into the He-Man world?

ED DUNCAN: Yeah. We actually wrote a story about connecting the dots between He-Man's antagonist, Skeletor, and Sun-Man's antagonist, Pig-Head, and one of them knocking a portal open between the two worlds and them scheming on some shenanigans they're going to take up in one of the worlds. And I think Pig-Head ends up in He-Man's world of Eternia, and Sun-Man follows to help stop what he's up to. That storyline took the shape of knocking down the wall between Sun-Man's world and He-Man's world.

MENELIK PURYEAR: I just hope that a whole generation of kids gets to have as much fun playing with Sun-Man as we did when I was a kid.

PHOEBE JUDGE: (As narrator) Yla's son, Menelik Puryear, joined his mother for the end of our conversation. He's in his early 40s now and a fashion photographer based in New York.

PHOEBE JUDGE: Do you still have an original Sun-Man toy?

MENELIK PURYEAR: Yes, I do.

PHOEBE JUDGE: Where do you keep it?

MENELIK PURYEAR: On my bookshelf.

PHOEBE JUDGE: Do you ever take it down and just play with it a little bit?

MENELIK PURYEAR: No. [CHUCKLES]

PHOEBE JUDGE: I mean, what do you think about your mother making this toy for you?

MENELIK PURYEAR: Oh, I think that she's a pioneer. And also, not just a pioneer. I mean, she's a hero. I think that one year, I told her that she was a civil rights activist. And she was like, I don't know what you're talking about. But I was like-- I think that there may have been some Black dolls before my mother, but they were always just white dolls painted black.

And my mother's really responsible for the industry changing the sculpt so that the toys also have the physical features of the kids and the people that they represent. So a whole generation of children didn't have to feel uncomfortable about the shape of their nose and the size of their lips.

And then also, to have your parents so invested in your personal image and your self-esteem that they would stop everything and create something based on the notion that was being attacked and that this was like the most important thing, I mean-- I think that everybody says that they have the best-- well, not everybody says they have the best mom in the world, but a lot of people say they have the best mom in the world. And, I don't know, I think I have a fighting shot at being able to prove it.

PHOEBE JUDGE: So it was worth it, Yla?

YLA EASON: Yes. Yes. That was wonderful to hear. Every child needs to feel really important. And if you can't see your image as being powerful and creative and imaginative, then it's important that that image come to life for you.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

PHOEBE JUDGE: (As narrator) *This is Love* is created by Lauren Spohrer and me. Nadia Wilson is our senior producer. Katie Bishop is our supervising producer. Our producers are Susannah Roberson, Jackie Sojico, Lilly Clark, Lene Sillesen, and Megan Cunnane. Our show is mixed and engineered by Veronica Simonetti. This episode was mixed and engineered by Rob Byers. You can learn more about the show on our website, thisislovepodcast.com. And you can sign up for our newsletter at thisislovepodcast.com/newsletter.

We hope you'll join our membership program, Criminal Plus, now on Patreon. It's the very best way to support our work. You can listen to *This is Love, Criminal,* and *Phoebe Reads a Mystery* without any ads. Plus, you'll get bonus episodes, behind the scenes photos and videos, and you'll be able to talk directly with us and other *This is Love* listeners. Learn more and sign up at patreon.com/criminal. We're on Facebook and Instagram at @thisisloveshow. *This is Love* is part of the Vox Media Podcast Network. Discover more great shows at podcast.voxmedia.com. I'm Phoebe Judge and *This is Love.*