

## EPISODE 84

### LEVEL B2

#### READING COMPREHENSION



#### SECRETS OF THE FACE

Is it really possible to **judge** (=assess, evaluate) someone's character from their face? The Chinese seem to think so. For over 2000 years they have been practicing Siang Mien, which is the art of judging character and **foreseeing** (=predicting) fortune from an analysis of the face. It developed in the **ancient** (= very old) **imperial** (= relating to an empire) courts of China and consisted of jealousy guarded secrets there were passed from master to a few chosen **apprentices**. The secrets of the face analysis were hidden away in special books which only a very few could look at.

These secrets cannot have been well guarded and must not have got out because practically all Chinese practice some form of the analysis. Mothers tell their daughters that men with flat noses and small **ear lobes** (= the soft part at the bottom of an ear) will make shy and rather **dull** husbands. Faces can be classified according to one of ten basic shapes. A triangular face is called a fire-face, a square – a wall face,, diamond-shaped – a jade-face, which may mean that people are **strong-willed** (= determined to do something you want). Once the basic shape has been decided, then parts of the face such as the eyes, nose, chin and mouth can be analyzed in their turn. People who have not got conventional or beautiful faces should not worry, as ugly people tend to be lucky. Turning to more specific features, it is known that people with eyes of different sizes are often brought up by **stepparents** (= parents from the next marriage). They are also believed to be charming as well as being capable of great **jealousy** (= a feeling of anger and sadness because you want to have sth others have).



### EXERCISE 1

Decide if the sentences below are true or false. Correct the false ones.

1. Siang Mien is not the art of judging character and foreseeing fortune from an analysis of the face.
2. A trilingual face is called a fire-face and may mean that people are strong-willed.
3. The secrets of the face analysis were hidden away in special books which many people could look at.

### ENGLISH IN USE



Guess the meaning of the following expressions from the context:

They **are believed to** be charming.

This means the same as people believe they are charming.

She **is said to have had** a difficult childhood.

This means that we think she had a difficult childhood.

We can use this kind of passive construction with verbs like: **say, believe, claim, think and know.**

### EXERCISE 2

Make the transformations of the following sentences:

1. People claim That Mona Lisa is the world's most famous painting.
2. Experts believe it was a portrait of a nobleman.
3. They say her smile hides a secret.
4. Many believe it is Leonard's masterpiece.
5. Scientists know he was a wonderful engineer.
6. Historians think he was unhappy in old age.

## IDIOM CLOSE-UP



**CRY YOUR EYES** = cry in an uncontrolled way and be unable to stop

## PHRASAL VERBS CLOSE-UP



### EXERCISE 3



**Fall by the wayside** = not be successful or effective any longer

**Be in the public eye** = well known to many people

**Take its toll on sb** = have a bad effect on sb

## NEWS



It was an extraordinarily public declaration of an incredibly private experience. But when Angelina Jolie took to the comment pages of the New York Times to declare that she had **undergone** a double mastectomy, she **spearheaded** a new awareness of gene testing as a guard against the possibility of breast cancer.

Doctors and medical experts specialising in the disease welcomed her announcement as a way of raising the profile of the test, but warned that for most women it would not be relevant as the gene mutation she has **inherited** is so rare.

In her account, published on Wednesday, Jolie appealed for greater access for gene testing and lifesaving preventive treatment and encourages women to explore their options.

The actor has a defective gene, BRCA1, which doctors told her increased her risk of developing breast cancer to 87%; it also increased her risk of ovarian cancer.

The surgery, which began in February, had reduced Jolie's risk of breast cancer to less than 5%. "I can tell my children that they don't need to fear they will lose me to breast cancer," she wrote. "It is **reassuring** that they see nothing that makes them uncomfortable. They can see my small scars and that's it. Everything else is just Mommy, the same as she always was. And they know that I love them and will do anything to be with them as long as I can.

"On a personal note, I do not feel any less of a woman. I feel **empowered** that I made a strong choice that in no way **diminishes** my **femininity**."

**Undergone** = (here)=had an operation

**Spearheaded** = lead an organised activity or effort

**Inherited** = received something after somebody who died

**Reassuring** = making you feel less worried

**Empowered** = given more power over sth

**Diminish** = make sth smaller

**Femininity** = qualities that are considered to be typical of women

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<b>KEY TO EXERCISES</b>
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**Ex. 1**

1. False
2. False
3. False

**Ex. 2**

1. People claim that Mona Lisa is the world's most famous painting.  
Mona Lisa is claimed to be the world's most famous painting.
2. Experts believe it was a portrait of a nobleman.

- It is believed to have been a portrait of a nobleman.
3. They say her smile hides a secret.  
Her smile is said to hide a secret.
  4. Many believe it is Leonard's masterpiece.  
It is believed to be Leonard's masterpiece
  5. Scientists know he was a wonderful engineer.  
He is known to have been a wonderful engineer.
  6. Historians think he was unhappy in old age.  
He is thought to have been unhappy in old age.