Rooftops of Tehran - Interview with Mahbod Seraji

Mahbod says that he read his first book, Jack London’s *White Fang*, on the same rooftop that is depicted in his debut novel.

“I was fascinated by how a writer could transport a reader to an entirely foreign land and make him feel at home,” Mahbod recalls.  “I knew right then that someday I would write my own book.”

Originally, Rooftops of Tehran was intended to be a series of short vignettes telling the stories of the people who had a profound impact on Mahbod’s life.  “The idea came to me when I was a student,” Mahbod says.  “I was standing outside my workplace in freezing cold weather, smoking a cigarette and wondering why my life was so damn miserable.  No money, no social life, no fun, I thought my younger years had been stolen from me.  But then I began to think of the wonderful people who had in some way or form touched my life. I realized, perhaps in a state of euphoria, that I had lived quite a wonderful life.  Right then, I thought of writing a book and calling it something like, The Stars in My Life.”

Despite his excitement for writing, Mahbod was too busy with his corporate life to devote any time to his true passion.  In early 2,000, after losing a job to cut backs, he seized on the opportunity to begin his adventures in writing.

“I wrote the first chapter and created Ahmed, Zari and Faheemeh, and that was the end of my plans for writing a series of short vignettes,” Mahbod remembers.  “I couldn’t let go of those characters, and Rooftops of Tehran became the story of those young kids.”

In the original version, the narrator of Rooftops was nameless.  Eventually Mahbod’s editor convinced him to choose the name: Pasha Shahed.  Pasha was the name the author would have been given if Mahbod was not chosen for him, and Shahed is his mother’s maiden name. But it has deeper meaning, too: Shahed is also the pseudonym used by his father, a prolific and well-known Persian poet.

Rooftops took about three years to write.  Mahbod says sometimes he would start writing at seven o’clock in the evening and would write all through night without realizing how much time had passed.  Rooftops of Tehran is not an autobiography, but some of the events in the story are based on actual experiences.

“The main characters in the story will certainly recognize themselves if they ever read the book,” Mahbod says with a smile on his face.

Authors Website -

http://www.rooftopsoftehran.com/index.php?option=com\_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=1&Itemid=96

Rooftops of Tehran Essay-

**Please choose one of the following essays to write for your final exam.**

**Essay #1** - In a well developed 5 paragraph essay, select one character and analyze how that character is affected by love, friendship, family, cultural, political or religious interactions.

**Essay #2-** In a well developed 5 paragraph essay, analyze how Mahbod Seraji, the author uses literary devices to further his themes.

*For example, in essay choice # 1, you might write one body paragraph about Pasha and Love and another about Pasha and Politics and a third about Pasha and the reign of the Shah. Your paragraphs must have different points.*

*For Example, in essay choice #2, you could write one paragraph about foreshadowing, one about literary allusions and another about symbolism. Your paragraphs must have different points.*

Once you have designed your thesis please do the following:

1. Write your name, teachers name, class and date in MLA format on the left-hand side of your paper [see the white board]
2. Write an original title for your essay

Your essay must have a minimum of one the following types of hooks:

1. A Hook :
   1. A Rhetorical Question
   2. An Anecdote
   3. A Direct Quote
2. A three point thesis that responds fully to the prompt located at the end of the introductory paragraph. Your thesis should always be in one sentence. **Your thesis must be highlighted.** - Please review Thesis handout, if you have questions.
3. Always write about literature in present tense. Example: *Pasha* ***goes*** *to America*
4. Transitions between paragraphs. *While Pasha loves Zari, he rejects the rule of the Shaw*.\*
5. Three Body paragraphs that each include 3 quotes that support your thesis followed by clear analysis not summary. *[mental tag line - This quote is important because...]* Remove mental tag in essay, as it for focus only.
6. MLA Citations after all quotes - (Seraji 55).
7. Paragraphs must be at least 5 complete sentences in length *[not including quotes]*
8. Do not use second person *(you, our, we, us).* Do not use contractions *(can’t, you’re etc.).*
9. A Thoughtful conclusion that takes the reader beyond the text, but does not start a new essay. Usually one key line that refers back to the hook or introduction.
10. Formatting, grammar, syntax and diction do count.

Your paper should be turned in to turnitin.com at the end of the period