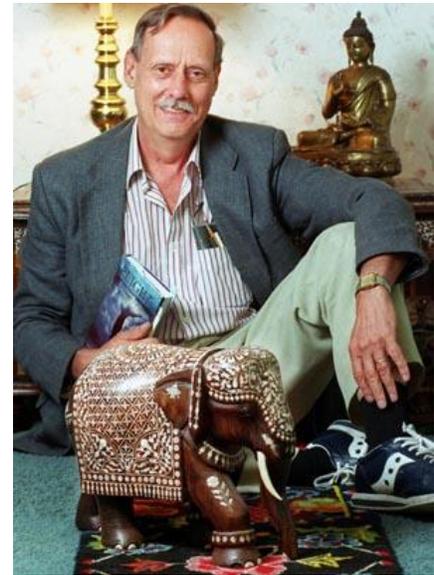


Nick Cibrario's books



Author Dominic ('Nick') Cibrario

## Portrait of a Writer: Nick Cibrario and The Garden of Kathmandu

By Don Messerschmidt

When Dominic ('Nick') Cibrario served with the first American Peace Corps group to Nepal, did he envision becoming a serious and acknowledged writer later in life?

He started his Nepal sojourn by teaching English and General Science in Bhimphedi, Makwanpur District, 1962-63. In those days, it was an 18-hour trek from Kathmandu to Bhimphedi over the Mahabharat range. During the monsoon of '63 he taught Art and Physical Education at Paropakar Orphanage in Kathmandu, then he moved to Kaliaya, in Bara District, to continue school teaching. Along the way Nick became proficient in Nepali, and took a serious interest in the religions of his neighbors and students: Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam, all of which gave him a solid background from which to craft his stories.

After Peace Corps he returned to the States, married, raised a family, earned a Bachelor Degree in Education and a Masters in Science, and became a serious artist of painting and sculpture. But writing about Nepal was never far from his mind.

The first in his Garden of Kathmandu Trilogy, *The Pomelo Tree*, was written in 1977 and published in 2000 (reissued in 2004). It was followed in sequence by *The Harvest* (2005), *The Shamans* (2006) and a sequel entitled *Murder in the Mountains* (2011).

***The Pomelo Tree*** tells the story of Carl Brecht, an American anthropologist who travels to South Asia to conduct research on shamanism. On the way he meets a British woman with two small children, all trying (unsuccessfully) to get away from the influences of a coven of dangerous witches and wizards in London. This, the first book in the trilogy, ultimately leads to “*chilling animal sacrifices*” (as one reviewer has put it) at a temple to Durga in Kathmandu. That event unleashes demonic forces affecting the lives of the American, the Brits, several Nepalese characters and even Kathmandu’s resident Catholic priest (modeled after Father Moran). Brecht becomes so involved in the personal turmoil of others that he doesn’t get much research done, which leads us into the next two installments.

In ***The Harvest***, Cibrario continues the saga, including a child abduction, wild jungle scenes at Chitwan, a search for the boy in India during the 1975-77 ‘Emergency’, and a brief love affair. “*Wow, I couldn’t put it down!*” said one reader.

It is not until the third book, in ***The Shamans***, that Carl Brecht finally begins his research with Shamans in and around Pokhara. The same characters continue to play significant roles while new personalities join in to further the author’s compelling chronicle of intrigue and misadventure. Now we begin to learn about Carl Brecht’s shaman studies, including exorcism and a rather mysterious reconnection with the child who was kidnapped earlier. As Cibrario draws the trilogy to a conclusion, you’d think it was all over. Not so.

In the sequel ***Murder in the Mountains***, Professor Brecht returns to Nepal decades later with his adult daughter to attend a meeting for the training of shamans as paramedics. This time the cast of characters, some well-known and a few more new to the tale, become embroiled (quite fictionally) in the Palace Massacre of June 1, 2001. And here, I cannot say it any better than Joe Sjostrom, a Chicago journalist, who has written that readers will “*cheer [the main characters] along as they strive to retain a grip on their principles and reality itself. Pick up this book on a day without important obligations. You’ll not be able to put it down!*”

Sure enough, I read it cover-to-cover within a few hours, deeply engrossed and greatly impressed by Nick Cibrario’s novel-writing talents.

And now – a sequel to the sequel. Cibrario is currently editing a fifth book in the series. ***The Long Road to Mount Kailash***, out soon, is based on a pilgrimage to western Tibet that the author took with Hindu friends in 2013.

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After reading Dominic Cibrario’s novels on Nepal you may want to check out his other books – *Secrets on the Family Farm*, a novel about life on an American farm, and *A Desperate Decision*, its’ sequel. And if that’s not enough, he has published a children’s book *Elmer the Octopus*, and *Hester the Weird Witch* (co-authored with his wife Geri Cibrario). Nick is now seeking a distributor for his books in Nepal. Meanwhile they are available at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) (North America), and overseas at [www.Amazon.in](http://www.Amazon.in) (India) and [Amazon.co.uk](http://Amazon.co.uk) (Britain), and as e-books on Kindle. For more information go to [www.pomelotree.com](http://www.pomelotree.com) or contact him at [nickcibrarioracine@sbcglobal.net](mailto:nickcibrarioracine@sbcglobal.net). A slightly different version of this review of Nick’s books is being published soon in Kathmandu’s *ECS Nepal* magazine.