

BOOK

BOOK BRINGS APOCALYPSE FOR SHOPPERS

STORY SET IN CAROUSEL CENTRE

Jessica Nico

HOW would you react if you were locked in a shopping centre while the world disintegrated around you?

Local author Brendan Ritchie has put four characters in that position in his new book *Carousel*, but there is a twist in store for Nox, Taylor, Lizzy and Rocky, who find themselves locked in Cannington's giant centre for months as an apocalypse destroys the world outside the automatic doors.

Ritchie said the characters were forced to live in the big, empty centre that they were not familiar with while trying to figure out what was happening outside.

"The book is set entirely within the confines of Carousel and I was tempted to drive out there and wander around, take some photos and get really familiar with the place," he said.

"But I decided I wanted to experience Carousel with the characters, who, aside from one, hadn't really been there before.

"The centre is a giant mystery to them and I wanted to channel that."

He said Australian authors had a long history of writing enthralling post-apocalyptic literature for young adults, but *Carousel* was different.

"The shopping centre setting makes *Carousel* slightly different to other post-apocalyptic literature because the characters don't have to fight for food or shelter," he said.

"There is an element of fantasy to having an entire shopping centre at their dis-



Author and Bicton resident Brendan Ritchie. Picture: Martin Kennealey

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posal and in this sense their battle for survival is more of an internal one.

"I think post-apocalyptic stories will al-

ways pose interesting questions about where we are headed as a society and what we value. Right now I think they also make

us consider how we communicate."

Brendan Ritchie's *Carousel* is available from Fremantle Press.