



The Peculiars

By Jen Thorpe



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Phobias abound at the Centre for Improved Living, where Nazma goes for help. She's crazy about baking and desperately wants to become a pastry chef, but her fear of driving keeps her stuck working in a train-station kiosk, where she sells stale food to commuters while dreaming of butter croissants and fresh strudel. The Centre is also a lifeline for Sam, who is scared to death of being robbed and spends his days in his pyjamas in front of his computer, his house alarm always armed.

Like the rest of the patients, Nazma and Sam want to face their fears, but will four weeks at the Centre be enough to change their lives? And will the two allow their budding romance to bloom without letting their phobias get in the way? Meanwhile, the Centre risks losing its funding, a fear that Ruby, the Centre's eccentric director, must face while she tries to manage the patients' fears. Set in a Cape Town as peculiar as its characters, The Peculiars is Jen Thorpe's heart-warming and humorous debut.



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