

# The Swaddledok

AUTHOR

**JOSH SZEPS**

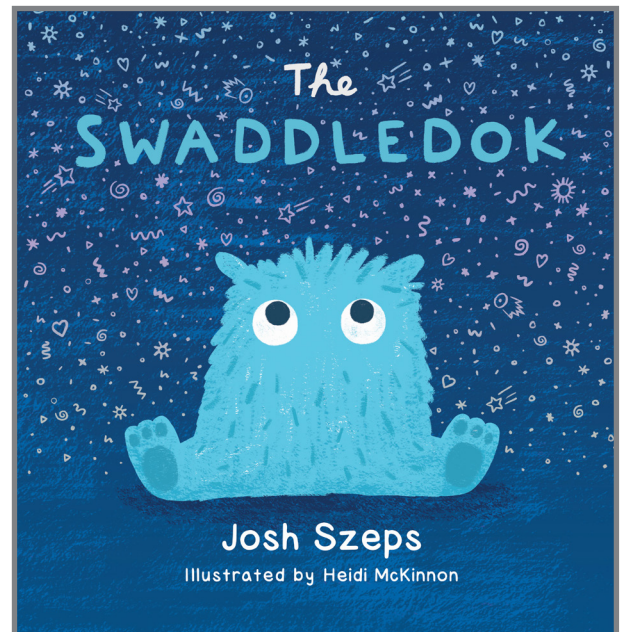
ILLUSTRATOR

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## SYNOPSIS

The swaddledok was tiny and cute when Stella got it. She'd wished for one for so long, and now it was here . . . Can Stella look after her swaddledok? Or is this going to be the worst decision she's ever made?

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Josh Szepe is a television and radio broadcaster and the host of ABC Radio Sydney's Afternoons program. He lives in Sydney with his husband and twins. Josh loves dogs but finds dolphins smug. Surprisingly, he hates Scrabble. *The Swaddledok* is Josh's first picture book.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Heidi McKinnon is an author/illustrator who lives in Melbourne. Heidi has a background in art and design. Her books are mostly based on true stories, except for one. Heidi's first picture book, *I Just Ate My Friend*, was shortlisted for numerous awards, including the CBCA Crichton Award, and has been published around the world. Her picture book *There's No Such Thing* was shortlisted for 2021 CBCA Early Childhood Book of the Year.

## STUDY NOTES

- Before reading the story, as a class discuss the book cover and title. Some things to include in your discussion could be:
  - What can you see happening in the cover artwork?
  - What do you think a Swaddledok is?
  - What might a Swaddledok do?
  - What do you think could happen to a Swaddledok in a story like this one?
  - What words would you use to describe the Swaddledok?
- In the story Stella loved the Swaddledok 'more than frozen blueberries, and she really loved frozen blueberries.' What is your favourite food? What is something (or someone) that you love more than your favourite food? Draw a picture of yourself eating your favourite food, and caption it with a one-sentence story about yourself, using the format 'I love \_\_\_\_\_ more than \*favourite food\*, and I really love \*favourite food\*.'
- Having read the book, do you think you would want to have a Swaddledok? Why/why not?
- Do you think that it was a good thing for the Swaddledok to use the forget-a-trom-eter on Stella?
- How do you think Stella would feel about the Swaddledok if she could remember all the things it did in the past?

- If you could have the perfect pet, what would it look like and how would it behave?
- How much does the Swaddledok's behaviour resemble the behaviour of real baby pets like kittens and puppies?
- In small groups, or as a class, think of as many words as you can that describe the Swaddledok's behaviour as it grows. Then think of a list that describes the behaviours that you would want in a perfect pet. Are there any words that appear on both lists? Why/why not?
  - Use the words in your lists to create a Swaddledok-themed word find. Illustrate the margins of your page with little pictures of the Swaddledok.
- Photocopy some of the key scenes in the book onto separate pieces of paper. Write a caption for each scene on a separate piece of paper, describing what is happening in it. Shuffle the pages and captions together so they are all thoroughly mixed up. In pairs, or small groups, work to put the scenes in the correct order, and pair each scene with its caption.
- Do you like the ending of the story? Why/why not? What do you think Stella and her Swaddledock might do next? As a class, discuss whether this was a satisfying ending, and all the things that the Swaddledok might do in the future.

## MAKE YOUR OWN SWADDLEDOK!

### Supplies

- Blue acrylic yarn
- Cardboard
- Scissors (adult supervision required)
- Googly eyes
- Small pieces of white card for feet
- You might also want to watch a video on making pompoms with cardboard templates before you start.

### INSTRUCTIONS

#### Step One: Make A Cardboard Pompom Maker

- On your piece of cardboard, draw two circles approximately 10cm in diameter. You can trace around a large mug or use a compass to make these circles.
- In the very middle of your circles draw a smaller circle. You can trace around a 20c coin or the lid of a glue stick to make these circles.
- Cut both your large circles out of the cardboard.
- For both circles, cut a straight line from the edge of the circle in towards the middle, then cut out the small circle in the middle.
- Cut a second straight line from the edge towards the middle, about half a cm away from the first cut.
- You should now have two pieces of cardboard that look a little bit like a doughnut with a small slice cut out.
- Place your cut-out circles on top of each other so that the cut parts line up with each other. You may want to trim them so that they match more exactly at this point.

#### Step Two: Make Your Pompom

- Wind the yarn around and around the pompom maker, passing it from the small circle at the centre to the outside and then back through the middle again, until all your cardboard is covered, and it looks like a big puffy yarn doughnut with a tiny slice missing. The hole in the middle of the doughnut should be almost completely full of yarn.
- Carefully work your scissors in between the two pieces of cardboard, and then start cutting the yarn around the outside edge of the doughnut.
- Take your time snipping all the strands of yarn, and be careful not to pull any out, or to let them shift around.
- Wrap another piece of yarn between your two pieces of cardboard so that it wraps around the centre of your pompom.
- Wrap it around several times, tying it tight each time you wrap it. (If this piece comes undone, your whole pompom will fall apart.)
- Gently remove your pieces of cardboard and fluff up your pompom.

#### Step Three: Assemble The Swaddledok.

- With a small pair of scissors, give your pompom a haircut to even out any long strands, and gently trim it to make it a

nice rounded shape. Don't trim too much length off your strands or it might fall apart!

- Cut out two Swaddledok feet from the white card, and glue them on to the bottom of your pompom.
- Trim two patches of pompom flat where you want the eyes to stick, then carefully glue the eyes in place. You can use googly eyes from a craft store, or small pieces of black card or felt.
- Write your name in pencil on the bottom of one of its feet.
- Arrange all the Swaddledoks in a class display in front of a copy of the book, for parents and visitors to admire.

**Step Four: Discussion**

- As a class, discuss what it was like making your Swaddledoks. What was the hardest part of it all? What was the easiest? Are you happy with your finished Swaddledok or would you like to make improvements next time?

AUTHOR OF NOTES  
**RAE CARLYLE**