

# The Backyard Adventures of *Knights and Thunders*

**FELICITY WILLIAMS** shares the latest episode in her exciting read-aloud series.

## *Dentist*

‘Open wide’, said Knights.

Thunder was squashed into the doll push-chair. He didn’t open wide.

Along the edge of the sandpit was a row of twigs, all neatly wrapped in shiny foil and, next to them, yoghurt pottles full of mud and pebbles.

‘Open!’ repeated Knights, waving a foil twig right in front of Thunders’ face. ‘I need to check your teeth. There might be cavities.’

Thunder did not want his teeth checked. He looked at the twigs and the pottles of pebbly mud and tore off down the other end of the garden.

Knights was mad. You couldn’t play dentists without a customer. She ran after him.

‘Come back’, she said. ‘It won’t hurt.’

Thunders shot up into the magnolia tree. He hadn’t known he could climb that fast.

Knights stood underneath the tree. All she could see were two gumbooted legs swinging back and forth.

‘Special offer: two cavities for the price of one’, she said hopefully.

Thunders kept swinging. The gumboots had lightning bolts on them.

‘Okay’, said Knights. ‘Let’s play robots. They don’t have teeth’, she added. ‘I’ll be the robot and then we’ll swap. Here’s your remote-control sensor-stick. I’m programmed to do whatever you tell me.’

Thunders slid down the tree. He pointed the stick that way.

Knights kicked up her legs and marched that way.

**‘Beep beep’**, she said.

Thunders wobbled the sensor-stick from side to side.

Knights wobbled from side to side.

**‘Bee-paa Bee-paa Bee-paa.’**

Thunders was beginning to like this game. He pointed the stick up the tree.

Knights grabbed the stick. ‘My turn now’, she said.

‘You are my personal robot and your name is Zog. Jump!’ she commanded. Thunders did a small stiff-legged jump.

**‘Bip’**

Knights tipped out a pottle of pebbly mud onto Thunders’ hands.

‘How about we clean the windows?’ she said. She pointed the sensor-stick at the ranch sliders and spun them in a circle.

Thunders spun his hands all over the windows.

**‘Eee-aah Eee-aah Eee-aah’**

He didn’t stop until the whole window was covered in grimy circles.

‘Excellent work’, said Knights. ‘Now pick up the leaves and put them in a pile.’

She charged around the garden pointing the sensor-stick at the leaves.

‘That’s enough’, said Knights after a few minutes. ‘Let’s suck them up the hose.’

Thunders didn’t move. He was bored.

‘Come on’, said Knights. She tapped Thunders on his gumbooted feet.

Thunders still didn’t move. He reached out a hand.

**‘Bee-paa?’**

‘Not yet’, said Knights. ‘Because I think your circuitry has broken down and I need to do repairs. And *then* it’ll be your turn.’

Thunders followed Knights down to the sandpit.

The doll pushchair had been covered in shiny foil.

‘Here’, she said, ‘lie down so I can repair you.’

Knights tapped the sensor-stick to his knees – **Bop** – his tummy – **Bop** – and then each shoulder – **Bop Bop**.

‘All good’, she said. ‘But one last thing.’

**‘Beeeeeep?’**

‘Open wide, so I can replace your batteries.’



## *Want to make a sensor-stick?*

### HERE’S HOW

1. Gather some twigs from around the garden: long, short, chunky and skinny ones. Make sure there are no sharp bits.
2. Get some aluminium foil and scrunch it around the sticks.
3. If you want, you can add some ribbon streamers at the tip of the sensor-stick.
4. Wave your sensor-stick around and see what happens!

Art activity designed by Felicity Williams  
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*Felicity Williams spent many happy years playing in the backyard when she was little. She learned about science swinging around at breakneck speed on a rotary clothesline, about biology by frequent venturings inside a smelly chicken coop, and about commerce and finance with weekend-long monopoly marathons. Now that’s she’s somewhat grown up, she provides weekly improvised play experiences along similar lines for hundreds of children at Canvas Bag Drama School. [canvasbag.nz](http://canvasbag.nz)*