

# *The Alphabet:*

*How Pine Cone and Pepper Pot*

*(with the help of Tiptoes Lightly and Farmer John)*

*learned Tom Nutcracker and June Berry their letters.*

*Reg Down*

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## **Prologue**

**F**armer John lives in the countryside with his two children, Tom Nutcracker and June Berry. His farm lies near the Snowy Mountains—you can see their snowy peaks glistening in the sunlight during the day and the moonlight during the night. Flowing through the farm is Running River. It is born high in the Snowy Mountains and flows first as a rivulet, then as a brook, then as a creek splashing and dashing down the rocky slopes until it runs into the valley. There it slows down and meanders through Farmer John's meadows and fields and enters his forest.

Just before Running River enters the forest an oak tree stands on a grassy knoll. The tree is huge and old and beautiful. High in the branches hangs an acorn. This acorn looks like any other acorn until you are close to it. Then you will notice that it has two windows and a door. Inside lives a fairy called Tiptoes Lightly. Her proper address is:

MISS TIPTOES LIGHTLY  
OF THE SKY-BLUE DRESS AND GOLDEN WINGS  
ACORN HOUSE  
THE GREAT OAK TREE  
FARMER JOHN'S FARM  
NEAR THE VILLAGE OF FAIREST OAKS  
BETWEEN THE SNOWY MOUNTAINS AND THE SEA

If you follow Running River into the forest you'll find different folk, two of whom are gnomes called Pine Cone and Pepper Pot. They live beneath an old pine tree. They wear mossy green jackets and pants, red boots with curling-up toes and pointy red hats with a sparkle on top. They also have long, important beards.

That's all you need to know for this story.