

Acme Pencil Sharpening Co.



First it was fountain pens, then Sharpie®s, then computers with speech-recognition software. Each newfangled method of putting thoughts to paper without the use of a No. 2 Dixon made the Acme Pencil Sharpening Company appear less and less cutting-edge (ha). As demand for professionally sharpened pencils dwindled, the firm was forced to lay off its artisans one by one. Today, Acme Pencil's employees number only two: Master Sharpener Billy Beezer and his imaginary friend, Meptang. But thanks to the pair's aptitude for discovering new uses for pencils – a kibblelike provender for carnivorous particle accelerators and the deep-tissue Breema manipulator favored by Ayurvedic masseuses, for instance – the company stubbornly survives. Alas, the same cannot be said for Lars Lamington, Acme Pencil's president, who made the mistake of trying to sack Meptang, but that's another ... well, *you* know.