

Vivien Wilson – Basil

Dear Mum and Dad,

I'm writing to tell you that, all being well, you'll be grandparents in a few weeks. Not that you had too much to do with my upbringing ... you just left me and my sister to get on with things as best we could. Anyway, you should be proud of the way I'm coping.

I've become a home builder. It's hard work. I'm up at dawn preparing materials and getting them to the building site. The house is almost finished except the women in my life keep changing their minds about the design. You'll be delighted to learn I've become a greenie so the house is all sustainable – made mainly from whatever I can find around the place - just as well, since we don't have any money. It's all temperature controlled too. So move over Kevin McLeod! I spend all my time at the work site. Mind you, Brenda isn't helping, criticising my very best efforts. 'Basil,' do you really want our kids to grow up in such a ramshackle house? Ramshackle indeed! It's bespoke! If she'd only told me in the first place where she wanted the nursery.

I wish you'd have been around more when I was growing up. Maybe given me a few tips about life and the opposite sex, not to mention the building industry. I had such a hard time getting planning permission. Our neighbour kept objecting. At first, he tried to bar my access to the site, then he removed all my building material. He even tried to knock it down, but I'm not one to give up easily. I just kept rebuilding. Finally, I went to Council and they told my neighbours they had to practice tolerance - after all, my forebears were here first. Mostly, I ignore them - even when their mowing guy comes around making the most terrible racket. Still, I do wish I had one of those leaf blower contraptions. The house is now lovely. I keep checking the temperature and it's perfect.

When the kids arrive, I wonder whether they'll look like me. If I do say so myself, I'm quite the most handsome brush turkey in Allambie!

Your son,

Basil