

I'm A Bad Driver
Diana D'Souza

As an unlicensed eighteen-year-old with only a permit to my name, I make every effort to avoid switching lanes, and I graciously let every car pass me before I make a left turn. When my mother feels brave enough to surrender the driver's seat and allows me to make the five-minute drive to the YMCA, my anxiety always heightens as she barks out orders: "Always brake as soon as you see the stop sign!" and "Did you even read the Driver's Manual?" My father doesn't even trust me on the side roads; he makes me sit in the back seat. So, it was no surprise when the expressionless, Death-Eater-like DMV Instructor announced, "You have failed your driving test in a *closed* parking lot."

To help struggling drivers like myself, I present to you *Wheelio*, a spell used to eliminate pesky obstacles that every amateur behind the wheel dreads: impatient drivers and anxious parents. To activate the spell, wave your wand in a circular motion when you are bombarded by tirades from the backseat driver and shout out, "Wheelio! Wheelio! Wheelio!" Mind you, when reciting the spell, remember to repeat thrice not twice, or else the spell will turn into a jinx. You will be forever tormented with your mother's nagging: "Don't forget to take out the trash"; "Make sure to clean your room"; "Did you wash the dishes?"

Within a couple seconds, you will notice a giant, inflatable bubble unfurling from your car's exhaust pipe, completely engulfing the exterior of the car. Any car that dares to come within a ten-foot radius of your car will immediately be catapulted several lanes over. Stop signs and traffic cones will move out of your way. In a way, the bubble is a life preserver for the car, protecting you from minor fender benders and more serious crashes. By creating a magical protective barrier, your backseat driver will feel more relaxed. Hence, the harangues will cease so that you can remain calm and concentrate on driving.

The best part about *Wheelio* is that your parents can finally be at ease sending their fledgling into the Abyss that is the Garden State Parkway. With what is essentially a life jacket on land, there is no need to lecture you about the "crazies out there" or the dangers of hydroplaning. Instead, your parents can hand you the keys while they take a much needed Spa Day.

In fact, one of my biggest regrets is that I didn't use this spell during my driving test. Perhaps the DMV Instructor wouldn't have noticed the curb I had mildly scraped if an inflatable cushion surrounded the car. But what if your DMV Instructor is demonic and chooses to pop the bubble to test your true driving skills? Have no fear. Constructed from Hedwig's feathers, Buckbeak's talons, and Moaning Myrtle's tears, this bubble is virtually impenetrable.

However, I must issue a cautionary warning to my fellow traffic hazards. Some of my more absent-minded friends have mispronounced the spell, yelling out “Wheelie” or “Hoolio.” Unfortunately, these friends now suffer from paralysis because mispronouncing the spell turns your windshield wipers into windshield vipers.

These days, I’ve been so emotionally scarred from failing my driving test that I have yet to sign up for a retest. My friend even bought me a copy of *Driving for Dummies* that I have yet to read. At this point, I’m just waiting for Elon Musk to get those flying cars approved. But if that doesn’t happen, I hope my mother is willing to chauffeur me around for the rest of my life.