

# the Reluctant Passenger

by Bonnie Staring

## Go Green *...with envy*

Everywhere you turn, people are talking about making things greener. If you don't mind me saying, I think the performance world is green enough already.

No, this isn't a rant on the pressure to use fuel alternatives or drive less—it's about dealing with the green eye of envy that takes hold of our drivers. Let's face it; automotive enthusiasts can be a competitive bunch. Just head out to any car event and earwig on a group of vehicle virtuosos. You'll probably hear:

*"Zero to 60? It was more like 160."*

*"...knew it was the alternator just by how it sounded."*

*"Over 40 pounds of chrome under the hood..."*

*"Yeah, I had to bleed the clutch, but I did it blindfolded."*

Unlike their fisherman brothers, car nuts rarely brag about the one that got away. That's because they don't want to be known as the driver doing without, like the poor schmuck who has a part on backorder in the middle of drive season.



This brings us around to the green stuff—what some passengers refer to as environmental enviousness.

Taking on different forms, it springs up in all kinds of environments: auctions, car shows, driveways, cruises, repair shops, parking lots, bathrooms...and wreaks havoc on the confidence of the afflicted car nut.

Here are the most notorious forms and how we, as passengers, can help our drivers cope:

### **Wish I had that ride**

He may never say it aloud, but you know he's been hit when his neck twists faster than a funnel cloud when the vehicle of his dreams rolls by. What you can do: pull out photos of the good

times he's had with the current street machine. It might bring a tear to his eye or have him rubbing the steering wheel fondly. Best to leave the two of them alone.

### **Wish I had that stuff in/on/for my ride**

While wanting to improve on what you already have is a good thing, part envy can be a huge problem if it gets out of hand. If you find a cam shaft or two under the couch, you're there already. What you can do: lead him to sage advice, whether from a good friend or from someone who installed the whatchamacallit or mambo widget that your driver's in a sweat over. Knowledge is power.

### **Wish I had a working ride**

This is the most challenging envy of them all, especially if the "wreck in progress" has been sitting in pieces on the asphalt since Groundhog Day. What you can do: be gentle, as this is when your car freak is at his most fragile. Even if you know for a fact the ride is idle due to operator error, use your gift of pointing out the obvious to call in some favours. Maybe some of his greasy friends can help.

Whatever you do, know that you're not alone. Coping with environmental enviousness is something we all have to go through. Consider it a sign that you've finally arrived. 

**About the Author:** Bonnie Staring is a comedian, advertising copywriter and one of those people who enters all kinds of contests. To see what else she's been ranting about, visit her website: [www.bonniestaring.com](http://www.bonniestaring.com)



Illustration created by Kayvene • website: [www.kayvene.typepad.com](http://www.kayvene.typepad.com)

