The Devil’s Highway is the nickname for a sun-blasted stretch of desert that runs from Mexico to Arizona, a rocky wasteland teeming with scorpions, rattlesnakes and seismic listening devices planted by the United States border service in order to monitor human traffic. In the desert, temperatures vacillate 50 degrees between sunset and sunrise, alternately scalding and freezing exposed flesh. Bandits and automated aerial drones roam above and below, looking for unlucky strays to prey upon. Now, something worse has begun to prowl The Devil’s Highway, something that bays gutturally at the fattening moon, and yet walks upright…

This hellish backdrop emerges as the most compelling element of the new comic FEEDING GROUND (the first two issues of which are available now from Archaia Publishing). The desert is presented as a monster in its own right—an evil, anthropomorphic entity that feasts on the faltering and craves human blood. Unfortunately, the other characters populating FEEDING GROUND are nowhere close to being this interesting.

The story follows the tribulations of the Busqueda family, noble Mexican peasants living in a shantytown village. The father acts as a “coyote”, guiding migrants along the treacherous Devil’s Highway to what is presumably a better life north of the border. The long-suffering Busqueda matriarch struggles stoically to keep her family centered while her husband is off in the desert, as her insecure teenage son aches for an opportunity to prove his manhood. Fans of lazy stereotypes will applaud the arrival of the village’s mustachioed villain, a portly lecher who refers to himself in the third person (“Even Don Oso needs something sweet to eat”). A werewolf eventually pops up, but leaves a less-than-threatening impression since he’s easily driven off by having a small rock thrown at him (Fango has encountered raccoons tougher than this guy).

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{jcomments on}