

Our Animals

The Lives Of Meerkats: A Soap Opera On Sand

(NAPSA)—Love, jealousy, treachery and drama may sound more like the stuff of soap operas than the lives of animals, but fans of a popular nature program will probably see the similarities.

“Meerkat Manor” chronicles the lives of a meerkat colony and is chock-full of romantic tension, cut-throat competition and gripping plot twists.

Meerkats, which are members of the mongoose family, live in the Kalahari Desert and stand about a foot high. On the surface, they seem to be adorable little creatures, but it turns out that these highly social animals are actually precocious and tough enough to send a cobra slinking into a hole.

Take Flower as an example. She’s the dominant female of the “Whiskers” meerkat clan. While her name may be delicate, she is anything but. Having worked her way to “matriarch” figure through perseverance and bravery, she is Queen of the Kalahari, and no one in the Whiskers family messes with her!

Then there’s Zaphod, the male right-hand man to Flower. A bit of a bruiser, he often leads the charge against rival clans, but this season, he begins to lose some of his mojo and leaves Flower picking up some of the slack.

The new season of “Meerkat Manor” airs on Animal Planet Fridays at 8:30 p.m., ET/PT. It follows the Whiskers clan’s quest for a new home, after being kicked out of their manor last season by their neighbors from hell, the “Commandos.”

Flower must lead her brood through a perilous journey to mark and settle into their new home, survive the weather and stave off the threat of predation. But the Whiskers must also face a new rivalry posed by their neighbors,



Drama In The Desert—A popular nature show follows the surprisingly intricate lives of a social animal group.

the Zappa gang, and Flower is determined to lead her brood to victory no matter what it takes.

Love Hurts

The plot thickens when the fighting persists within the Whiskers’ own inner circle. Ever the dysfunctional family, the Whiskers find themselves involved in confrontation, control, love affairs and more drama than ever. With promiscuous daughters and sisters fighting over the same main man, it’s no wonder that it’s a slippery slope surviving desert life.

Following the Story Online

Fans can get a who’s who tutorial of the show’s characters, learn more about the fascinating and adorable creatures and even play interactive meerkat games at www.animalplanet.com.

Looking for a Meerkat Near You?

If you’re ever near Morongo Valley, California, you can interact with meerkats in a one-of-a-kind experience by checking out Fellow Earthlings’ Wildlife Center. More information can be found at www.fellowearthlings.org. And you can find out if there’s a zoo with meerkats in your local area by visiting <http://animal.discovery.com/fansites/meerkat/meerkat.html>.