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| 00:30  | I have a recurring dream. |
| 00:37  | A bushman is hunting in an endless savannah along with a cheetah. |
| 0:45  | A savage, some would call the man, as wild as the animal that accompanies him. |
| 0:54  | Instead, he is a man who knows this land as well as he knows himself... he understands its subtle signals... is inextricably linked to its nature... is an integral part of it. |
| 01:09  | He is immersed in its grandeur and never tires of gazing at its vistas, perhaps trying to grasp their essence and purpose. |
| 01:30  | There is no need to consult Freud to interpret my dream: it is obvious that subconsciously I want to be like this man. |
| 01:45  | To be able to embrace and perceive the immensity of the African landscape.To understand its secrets.To find out what makes it so different.Or perhaps just to return to the ancestral cradle where humanity began millions of years ago. |
| 02:05 | In short, this continent arouses unusual emotions in me. |
| 02:15 | Of course, I'm happy when I photograph pumas and guanacos in Patagonia, or rare birds in New Guinea.But not as happy as when I am working on this continent. |
| 02:35 | The man in my dream doesn't need a computer, let alone a book, to identify a species.I do... for now. |
| 02:55 | My task this time is to document how in the dense South African bush it is possible for a determined wildlife photographer to have exceptional encounters, even outside the huge natural parks.It isn’t easy, but I don’t mind at all: what I’m looking for is the Africa that is completely hidden from tourist eyes. |
| 03:25 | I rely on a guide I know well.A man of experience who has already accompanied me on other trips in the area.An alter ego of the African in my dream. |
| 03:45 | In the undergrowth we can see animals only when they cross the road. |
| 04:14 | It would be better to continue on foot and try another approach. |
| 04:22 | But we have to be very careful!In this dense thicket even large animals can blend in very well. |
| 04:55 | But these elephants feel more vulnerable in the slightly more open area, and leave as soon as they realise they are being watched. |
| 05:08 | A little further on lies the remains of something that cannot run away, the carcass of a rhinoceros brought down by poachers. |
| 05:23 | It isn’t pleasant to find more and more signs like this every time I come back to Africa.Majestic but vulnerable animals killed in the name of profit. |
| 05:37 | But all is not lost.Here are a few animals that seem oblivious to the fact that their species is so threatened by human greed.I'd like to ask the man who appears in my dreams if his Gods know how much longer we will be able to observe the behaviour of these giants in the wild. |
| 06:02 | These are blacks rhinos, those most at risk of extinction.They are known for their solitary and bad-tempered disposition. |
| 06:13 | I’m amazed to see them apparently so affectionate with each other, despite their reputation.They even emit sounds like those of playful kittens, rather than pachyderms weighing over a ton! |
| 06:51 | Another one emerges from the forest.It also heads for the water hole. |
| 07:06 | The situation could become tense… |
| 07:20 | But no!It's amazing, even the newcomer is accepted by the group.I've never seen such good-natured behaviour among adult black rhinos. |
| 07:33 | But up to a point!  |
| 07:42 | The group disperses, and each one goes on its way, alone, by the book. |
| 08:39 | A final look at the carcass of the less fortunate rhinoceros, and then we head for the river.To get there we have to cross a deep gorge. |
| 09:03 | We are in the southern part of that split in the earth's crust known as the Rift Valley, which stretches some 6,000 km from Syria to Mozambique. |
| 09:18 | Here the continent, driven by slow but inexorable tectonic forces, is breaking in two.One day there will be a sea in this gorge separating two coasts.But it is not something that need worry me now: it will take millions and millions of years! |
| 09.44 | It is here in the Rift Valley that the remains of our ancestors have been found.Here was born the species that unites the man in my dream and me.Perhaps my DNA retains an imprint of this origin.Is that why I feel Africa so intensely? |
| 10:07 | Just a little further to the river.Perhaps this herd of buffalo is heading for the waterhole.Our presence has obviously bothered them. |
| 10:25 | Here is a clear indication of the proximity of water! |
| 10: 32 | Finally, the river.A few more meters to position ourselves better so I can photograph my subjects without disturbing them. |
| 11.08 | During the day it seems that the hippos have nothing to do but wallow in their pools and doze.In fact, they have a very busy social life.They continuously interact to establish hierarchies and dominance.Providing good opportunities for my photographic portraits! |
| 12:15 | There is something wrong with one of them… |
| 12:23 | A steel noose that has made a deep gash in its neck.It’s clearly a gift from unscrupulous poachers.We're leaving, sadly certain that that hippo won’t have long to live. |
| 12:42 | Now we have to ford the river to reach an area frequented by a group of baboons. |
| 12:51 | But between the monkeys and us are some disturbing presences! |
| 13:00 |  Fortunately, the great reptiles seem busy with something else. |
| 13.18 | A group of guinea fowl accompany us as we approach the baboons.Sometimes these monkeys add protein to their largely vegetarian diet, occasionally catching small mammals or birds.But in this case they seem to chase the guinea fowl more for fun than anything else. |
| 13.43 | The pack is gathering on the riverbank. |
| 13:49 | They begin to cross it with all their famed agility. |
| 13:58 | Some individuals seem more cautious: are they afraid of crocodiles or don’t they like water?Only the youngest continue their scuffles in the water, without a care in the world. |
| 14:25 | **Vervets** observe the ford from the safety of trees.Now that their larger, more numerous cousins have moved away, they can go down to the riverbed. |
| 14:49 | Up come two small antelopes, called imbabala, one of the species of *Tragelaphus* that inhabit the bush of sub-Saharan Africa. |
| 15:01 | The monkeys and antelopes seem intrigued by each other. |
| 15:19 | Incredibly, they begin to play with each other.They are like children who speak different languages but, when it comes to playing, understand each other perfectly. |
| 15:50 | This is something else I’ve never seen before. |
| 16:00 | But it would be hard to miss that bright spot amongst the green. A fisher eagle is hunting…This time, the fish was faster!  |
| 16:25 | All it can do is give its typical cry, which many consider the voice of Africa. |
| 16:3516:40 | Looking for other subjects.Zebras can also run away and blend into the bush.But the giraffe has nowhere to hide! |
| 16:59 | The zebras also calm down when they see the giraffe looking relaxed. |
| 17:10 | I try to imitate it... I walk... slowly. |
| 17:22 | Well, not that slowly... |
| 17:52 | The heat and drought have already claimed some victims. |
| 18:05 | Only a few perfectly adapted animals can survive in the driest parts of this area. |
| 18:18 | These species, such as the Oryx, depend on what little moisture the plants they eat can absorb from the mists of condensed water vapour. |
| 18:29 | Sometimes, if rarely, the haze becomes so dense that it turns into violent rain showers. |
| 18.40 | But they don’t last long.The scorching sun soon comes back to lord it over the desert. |
| 19:05 | Now we are in Namibia.The beauty of this fascinating landscape disguises the difficulties that the plants and animals face in their daily struggle to survive. |
| 19:58 | This quiver tree, so called because the bushmen made quivers for their arrows from it, has adapted to survive in almost perpetual drought.  |
| 20.10 | In its branches and those of other rare trees with long trunks, sociable weavers build their huge communal nests. |
| 20:20 | Here it is not difficult for these gregarious birds to find blades of dry grass with which to build their cities. |
| 20:42 | Even far larger animals have adapted to survive in this hostile environment.The elephants in the deserts of Namibia are smaller than those that live in more lush lands.Here, instead of tree branches, they live almost entirely on dry grass that contains fewer calories.Their evolutionary response? Remain relatively small. |
| 21:15 | It’s a difficult environment.Enjoying a tragic beauty that is always in flux, it’s subjected to the whims of the wind and the scarce and unpredictable rains. |
| 21:26 | Here every blade of grass counts.And to find them animals are forced to take long journeys across seemingly endless vistas. |
| 21:37 | The hartebeest takes advantage of the dry earth to take a sterile dust bath, getting rid of annoying pests. |
| 22.00 | As in all natural environments, there are those who are at the top of the food chain. |
| 22.16 | In an environment with scarce and scattered prey, cheetahs have the advantage of being able to scan wide treeless areas. |
| 22:28 | But today this family group just seems to want to laze around.An activity at which felines excel! |
| 22:55 | Although it rarely rains, the desert is almost never completely free of water.Trees indicate the presence of an underground aquifer. |
| 23:06 | The rare but violent rains form ephemeral rivers whose courses, now invisible, we can guess by the arrangement of the trees. |
| 23:18 | But the desert always contains surprises.Between two rocky slopes of arid mountains a gorge has formed that is able to conserve water.Here the vegetation is lush. |
| 23:28 | In some areas of the valley the water rises constantly and creates permanent pools. |
| 23:38 | This one, with its crystal clear waters thanks to the filtering action of the sand, is even host to many small fish, that got here who knows how. |
| 23:54 | But in most of this area there is no trace of water and it is just the wind that constantly shapes the landscape. |
| 24:38 | The water is so deep down that the roots of plants can no longer reach it. |
| 24:50 | But all it takes is a depression in the ground and the trees manage to reach the underground water. |
| 25:08 | In such a dry area ​​the few stable pools of water are a magnet for lots of animals. |
| 25.19  | When they arrive, often after an exhausting journey, they greedily drink their fill. |
| 26:05 | For the giraffes, it is a little more complicated. |
| 26:18 | But they have their very own tried and tested method to get to the water... down there! |
| 27:35 | Not that such a small pool offers these giants much to wallow in. |
| 27:50 | But there's enough to quench the thirst of the whole herd. |
| 28:00 | The elephants resent the presence of intruders when they are in a pool. |
| 28:23 | But their sheer bulk and a certain amount of arrogance are enough to scare off everyone, no matter how thirsty they are. |
| 28:36 | What's more, they can always resort to the use of water cannons to disperse the crowd. |
| 28:54 | The little one has not yet fully mastered the use of its proboscis. |
| 29:08 | Its mother tries to keep it away from a potentially dangerous situation. |
| 29:22 | He stubbornly insists.Until he gets a fright and rushes into the arms, so to speak, of his mother for a comforting feed. |
| 29:43 | Although they have quenched their thirst, the herd has no intention of leaving the pool. |
|  | The young engage in play fights. |
| 30.00 | The littlest continue to practice using their trunks… or roll in the dust. |
| 30:29 | The adults are engaged in something more serious, although they are disturbed by a young male who is probably the jealous son of the young female.  |
| 30:59 | It's time to go and explore another area. |
| 31:20 | The guide tells me that there is an old, bad-tempered male hippopotamus that has chosen to live in his very own pool since being expelled from the herd. |
| 31:35 | It seems calm while the oxpeckers are on its back looking for parasites. |
| 31:44 | But the calm doesn’t last long. |
| 31:51 | He seems bothered by our presence. |
| 31:56 | We’d better to go, quickly!We were probably not careful enough.We both know very well that hippos are the major cause of human deaths in Africa, and an exiled male is especially dangerous. |
| 32:30 | Not having had enough of strong emotions, we decide to proceed on foot through the bush. |
| 32:38 | I go in the direction in which the elephants seemed to be heading. |
| 32:42 | They show up and head confidently towards the point that they probably already familiar with.  |
| 33:03 | But the waterhole has already dried up and all they can do is throw a little mud over themselves to create a protective layer against parasites and the heat. |
| 33:30 |  They seem happy enough with this half bath of mud. |
| 33:58 | This large, more experienced male has sniffed out a better pool. |
| 34:14 | He is undoubtedly a master in the art of covering oneself in mud! |
| 34:37 | But only when they find a pool suitable for their size, can elephants fully express their happiness. |
| 35:29 | For them it’s time to go foraging again. For me it’s time to look for other subjects. |
| 36:10 | Something for my telephoto lens.The southern ground hornbill can reach a metre in height.They are omnivores and prefer to eat on the ground. Although they are now looking for seeds, they don’t turn down insects and small reptiles. |
| 36:29 | The secretary bird, unlike its cousins the ​​eagles, also prefers to hunt on the ground. |
| 36:40 | It carefully scrutinises the terrain in search of its favourite prey, snakes. |
| 36:47 | But large insects can also end up beneath its fast-moving claws. |
| 37:08 | Something much larger on the other side of the river catches my eye. |
| 37:12 | Two elephants come out of the bush and pose freely for my lens. |
| 37:25 | One has a nasty gash on its trunk.No doubt caused by a steel strap used for poaching. |
| 37:38 | However, the wound does not seem to have affected its ability to use the versatile organ. |
| 37:48  | Why does the wind have to change direction just now!They seem to have scented me and take flight. |
| 38:16 |  On foot again, but the area is tricky with all these bushes. |
| 38:25 |  My guide seems to know where he is going. |
| 38:34 | Sure, it's the perfect place to find lions, and that's what we're looking for, but it’s also an ideal place for them to ambush us! |
| 38:41 | He has spotted something. |
| 39:04 | There! |
| 39:08 | A leopard!I do not mind at all.The leopard is a very elusive animal. |
| 39:28 | But the guide does not give up.He is determined to at least find me a lion! |
| 39:34 | In fact… |
| 39:52 | This, however, was easy...In the time they dedicate to love, an average of three days a year, lions do not move around, have little interest in what is going on around them and concentrate on copulating with great frequency.But catching them at it with this light is a stroke of luck! |
| 40:18 | Once the act is over, the female makes it clear that she is not interested in cuddling. |
| 40:46 | The Kalahari is a vast arid plateau.Its name comes from the Tswana language and means "great thirst"... and the reason is clear! |
| 40:53 | Ostriches, like all animals, do not have an easy time here.They also cover themselves with powdery earth, of which there is no shortage, in order to find some relief from pests. |
| 41:28 | Males must keep their distance from each other.The dominant male makes it clear which space he considers his, and the subordinate male can only bow his head. Literally! |
| 41:45 | As soon as the intrusive ostriches move away, the meerkats decide that it's time to come out of the den. |
| 41.51 |  But cautiously. |
| 41:57 |  Especially when you’re with the family! |
| 42:18 | Now they can dedicate themselves to searching for food, digging away busily. |
| 42:25 | But not without posting a guard on the highest bush. |
| 42:31 | When the guard sounds the alarm… everyone takes cover! |
| 42:48 | The large grassy expanses of the Kalahari are also home to large herds of antelope, such as Oryx...hartebeest… and wildebeest. |
| 43:20 | But by far the largest herds are those of the Springboks.  |
| 43.36 | These bouncing leaps serve to demonstrate to females that the individual is fit and worthy of their attention. |
| 43:47  | Nevertheless, the male must always fight a rival to underline the fact. |
| 43:57 | But that can easily attract the attention of unwanted guests. |
| 44:20 | This pair of cheetahs also invites their young to accompany them on the hunt. |
| 44.40 | Perhaps it was a mistake.The young people do not yet know how to properly conceal themselves, are spotted and ruin the hunt. |
| 45:03 | A lesson to be repeated at the earliest opportunity. |
| 45:20 | But the gazelles are not always so lucky.The remains of this less fortunate Springbok were left for the black-backed jackal from a previous successful hunt. |
| 46:00 | Water is also a scarce resource in the Kalahari.Namaqua sandgrouses are perhaps the creatures that fly the furthest to find it.They come in flocks to pools whose coordinates they have learnt at some point in their lives.They are not only concerned with their own thirst, but also that of their young in nests tens of kilometres away.Which is why they dip their feathers in the water before leaving for the long journey home. |
| 46:40 | This Oryx seems puzzled by the confusion that the sandgrousescreate with their comings and goings. |
| 46:52 | In the end it decides to drink.But it remains tense, like all herbivores when drinkingPredators could always be lurking in places where they know that their potential prey will have to go. |
| 47:05 | The noise and bustle of dozens of birds coming and going make it stop drinking twice.Perhaps the flock seems a single, menacing flying being? |
| 47:30 | It has had enough of this chaos! |
| 47:40  | There are also wildebeest among the large antelope that live here. |
| 48:06 | Despite their thirst, they are also hesitant to approach the waterhole.The birds seem to behave like little fish that gather in a ball when threatened by predators. Hurdled all together they look like a much larger organism. |
| 48:16 | Eventually thirst gets the better of fear...but not for long! |
| 48:44 | Despite being a predator, the cheetah is also cautious when approaching the waterhole. |
| 49:07 | When it finally decides to drink, it remains alert and attentive. |
| 49:18 | It notices that a little further on there is a jackal that dares to drink at the edge its own waterhole. |
| 49:23 | It is strongly tempted… |
| 49:30 | The mother joins the offspring and decides to teach this cheeky interloper a lesson.It is probably the same daring animal that was feeding on the leftovers of their prey. |
| 49:40 | It is more of a playful training session than a real hunt, but the jackal does not seem to be having fun! |
| 50:00 | Another day in the bush is coming to an end. |
| 50:09 | It has allowed me to observe animals such as rhinos and elephants in the wild, but also many more little things that my eyes, veiled by nostalgia for Africa, find equally charming. |
| 50:27 | Now my desire to return here is more vivid than ever.And not in a dream, but in reality! |
| 50:34 | But every time I return it will always and only be as a distant relative of the man in my recurring dream, corrupted as I am by exposure to other landscapes, other cultures, other living beings.  |
| 50:44 | I can’t help touching this large anthill.Perhaps to feel physically closer to the cradle of humanity. |
| 51:02 | But no matter how much I tried, I know that I could never be like the man in the dream. |
| 51:13 | He is not only emotionally tied to Africa... he *is* Africa. |
| 51.24 | He is the rivers of Africa, its lakes, its savannahs, forests and deserts. |
|  | This trip has brought me once more to this continent and perhaps sharpened my sweet longing. |
|  | But it doesn't matter: my nostalgia for Africa is the only pain I have no desire to cure. |