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It was in Matusadona that I first tracked a lion on foot, with John Dabbs, who is now retired from guiding. Early one morning, we spotted large fresh lion spoor in the mud on the edge of a little inlet of the lake. A big male lion had been drinking not long before we arrived and we set off to track him through the bush. It was a dry October day and his spoor was clearly visible in the sand. After a while, we heard the angry noises of a fight coming from a patch of dense undergrowth – lions on a kill, snarling and growling at one another as each tried to get the choice bits. We stood quietly for a while but they got a whiff of us. There were three lionesses, not our lion, their yellow backs slipping through the dry grass, lit by sunlight as they streaked away from us as fast as possible. We peaked under a tree where had heard the noise. Lying there was the half-eaten carcass of an impala that must have been killed just moments before. Once again, we picked up our lion spoor and walked on, zigzagging, losing then re-locating the tracks. Then John suddenly saw a movement in front of us and dropped down low to the ground; as he did so, he ordered me to do the same and to remain behind him. We inched forward on our bottoms across the dry sandy bed of a stream. Waiting and looking. Nothing. Maybe he had moved on. We stood up to get a better view and at that moment the lion jumped out from behind a large fallen tree trunk and gave us a spine-chilling roar. My heart stopped. I have walked many times in the bush and listened to all the instructions about standing stock still, but, on this occasion, without even realising what I was doing, I took about ten steps backwards very quickly. John did not move though. The lion stared at us for a few moments, flicked his tail and turned to walk off. We could breathe again. Moving a few paces, we saw that he had walked on about twenty yards, and was sitting down under a tree to watch what we would do next. ‘Let’s go now,’ said John, ‘He is telling us that enough is enough and that this is all he is going to tolerate.’ Who was I to argue?