

Out of the Mashatu

One of my favorite places in Africa is the confluence of the Shasha and Limpopo rivers on eastern border of Botswana. This area is less visited than Botswana's famous Okavango Delta, but has rich and varied wildlife, including many of the normally elusive leopards.

"Mashatu" the name of this region, is derived from a huge and beautiful tree that is common there. These trees have large knurled trunks and dark green, feathery leaves; they provide welcome islands of shade in this sometime arid landscape.

We came upon this large male leopard high up in this Mashatu and parked nearby, waiting for him to come down. He did so in a series of head first leaps, the last of which is depicted in this drawing.

When the leopard reached the ground, he stopped for a moment and looked over his shoulder as if to say, "Did you get that? "Do I have to do it again? Then he gracefully walks away.