

Goat Song



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CHAPTER ONE
HE HAD BEEN RUNNING a long time so now there was a sickness in him. The sickness came up from his belly in waves and it tasted vile. He thought about thrusting his fingers into his mouth in order to relieve himself by vomiting; but to do that he would have to take one hand off the goat kid he had stolen; and besides there was nothing in his belly to throw up anyhow. Where he was now in the foothills of the Parnons the air was thin and sharp so that to drag it into his lungs made a tearing. Behind him the mountains were a soaring bleakness forbidding hope. Off to his left was another blue-tinging of mountains the Taygetus taller bleaker still with their peaks glittering whiter than a cry in the morning though spring had long since come to Lakonia. He could see far

below him the river which his countrymen called the Lakedaemonians called the Eurotas flashing silver like a shield. If he could reach it cross it he would be safe. But he knew what his chances were of doing that. Slight. Or none. He looked back to see if the villagers had given up the chase. But they were still lumbering along behind him clad in their goatskins bearded filthy looking for all the world like a horde of lesser demons escaped somehow from Tartarus such minor fiends as Lord Hades employed to torment the shades of the wicked among the dead. And it came to him with a sudden contraction of his breath his heart that they weren't going to give up. Not now; not ever. Poor as they were a kid was an important thing to them. But that wasn't the main point. The main point was that he A_riston shouldn't have climbed so high into the

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