

When five-year-old Sivagami witnesses her father being branded a traitor and executed by the maharaja of Mahishmathi, she vows to one day destroy the kingdom. At seventeen, she recovers a manuscript from her crumbling ancestral mansion. Written in a strange language called Paisachi, the manuscript contains a secret that may redeem her father or condemn him further.

Meanwhile, Kattappa, a proud and idealistic young slave who blindly believes in his duty, finds himself in the service of a spoilt prince. Alongside, he must try and keep his brother, who resents their social position and yearns for freedom, out of trouble.

As Sivagami tries to unravel the secret of the manuscript, she finds that the empire of Mahishmathi is teeming with conspirators, palace intrigues, corrupt officials and revolutionaries. An ambitious nobleman will do anything for power and money. A secret group of warriors under the leadership of a seventy-year-old woman is determined to stop the slave trade. A forest tribe, deeply resentful of having been driven away from their holy mountain three hundred years ago, is preparing to wage war against the king.

From the pen of Anand Neelakantan, the bestselling author of *Asura: Tale of the Vanquished*, *Roll of the Dice* and *Rise of Kali*, comes *The Rise of Sivagami*, filled with staggering intrigues and unforgettable characters. A riveting tale of intrigue and power, revenge and betrayal, *The Rise of Sivagami* is a befitting prequel to S. S. Rajamouli's blockbuster film *Bahubali*.

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Book I

Anand Neelakantan

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*To my sister, Chandrika and
brother-in-law, S. D. Parameswaran,
for making me what I am.*