As the inhabitants of Redwall relax in the haze of the long, hot summer, they are unaware that the neighboring stronghold of Salamandastron lies besieged by the evil weasel army of Ferhago the Assassin. Nor do they realize that Mara, beloved daughter of Urthsipe, Badger Lord of the Fire Mountain, is in terrible danger. But when a lightning bolt uncovers the sword of Martin the Warrior, young Samkin embarks on adventure that leads him to Mara, and their lives become inextricably entwined. Brian Jacques once again strikes to the heart in this stunningly executed adventure, another in the best-selling Redwall series, proving, if indeed proof was needed, that he ranks high among the best childrens authors in the world. His genius lies in his ability to capture character and atmosphere with a stroke of a pen, drawing the reader in until the only way to start breathing again is to finish the book. --Susan Harrison

**Personal Review: Salamandastron (Redwall) by Brian Jacques**
The Book of Salamandstron
Salamandstron, written by Brian Jacques in 1992 and published in 1993, is the fifth book in the Redwall Series. Like all Redwall books, Salamandstron is an animal adventure saga, which picturesquely describes a stunning tale set in medieval times. Intently, because of the strength of the story line, the reader will continue on through the book, like a bookworm, to find out what happens in the end. When finished the person who examines this book, will have perused 391 obsessive pages, which, as interpreted, would have taken the reader through the world of Redwall.

Since the book, at times, tells five different stories, there are several different main characters and several antagonists. The first main character to be introduced is Lord Uthstripe the Strong, the Badger lord of Salamandstron, a mountain fortress. The Badgers lords of this massive mountain are mysterious characters. They are fierce fighters and reckless worries, who at times can be possessed by the terrible blood wrath and kill all in sight. Uthstripe's adopted daughter Mara, at the beginning of the book, was not content with her life at Salamandstron. The military fortress was strict and forcible, and Mara did not like her restrictions. Samkin, a young squirrel, contentedly lived at Redwall Abbey. In the beginning he was very mischievous and many times because of his carelessness, almost caused serious injuries. Ferahgo was an evil, cruel, pain-causing tyrant, who was the assassin weasel and chieftain of the horde of corps makers. Cruelly he Murdered Urthstripes parents and caused Urthstripe and his albino brother to be separated. Ferahgo's son Klitch was just as evil and crafty as his father. Fighting against each other, both wanted control of Salamandstron. Another enemy (although not a living creature) gets introduced about half way through the book. A terrible sickness called Dryditch Fever takes hold of the Abbey. It almost wipes out all. Although the characters all have different story lines within the book, each one is tied together in the end.

Opening at Salamandstron, the story begins with gloom. From the first, as Urthstripe reveals his anxiety for Mara with the words "Any sign of Mara yet?" it tells of Mara's discontentedness with the strictly ruled life she is living. It opens with her gone on one of her frequent run-a-ways. When she returns after two days absence from the mountain she brings two vermin, one of them Klitch, who falsely befriended her. Urthstripe throws the weasel and his companion out of the mountain, and Mara becomes so angry that she runs away for good. Accidentally (at Redwall) Samkin finds the skillfully crafted sword of the Legendary Hero, Martin the Warrior, but two stoats evilly steal the magnificent sword. The vermin were part of Ferahgo's horde but deserted. Samkin and Arula (Samkin's mole friend) chase after the stoats because the sword, which they took, represents the spirit of Redwall and could not be lost. They met some peculiar friends. Back at the Abbey Dry Ditch Fever broke out. Everywhere, from Salamandstron to Redwall Abbey trouble seemed to be taking hold of the good guys.
As the book continues the troubles grow worse. Mara, after being chased by Ferahgo's horde, escapes, but was betrayed into the hands of King Glagweb, the head of a cannibal toad tribe. Unfortunately she and several shrews, which were also caught, were going to be served up at a special occasion. Back at Redwall Thrugg, a brave otter set out on a journey to the mountains of the north to try to find the Icetor Flowers, which will cure any sickness. Sadly, however he gets trapped. Attacking him, a horde of crows in a pine forest almost overwhelmed Thrugg and his little friend baby Dumble. Samkin and his mole friend Arula were still persistently chasing after the vermin who stole the sword, when, one died of Dryditch fever and the other was killed by Ferahgo's tracker rats. The head of the trackers took the sword and headed back to Ferahgo's horde, but Samking and Arula still followed. They followed to get back the sword, they followed for their friends at the abbey, and they followed to slay the takers of Martins legendary blade. At Redwall Abbey, as dry ditch fever took victim after victim, all but two or three animals were stricken. At Salamandstron there was great famine because Ferahgo who besieged the mountain somehow destroyed or poisoned all the mountains food. Will Redwall Abbey be wiped out, or will Thrugg get back in time with the Icetor flowers? Will Mara and her friends be eaten or will they find a way to escape? Will Samkin retrieve the great sword? Will Salamandstron hold out? To discover what happens, READ THE BOOK!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

If The book Salamandstron is amazing it is because it seizes and holds the readers attention. Having a good story line, this book is extremely well written. Undoubtedly, another reason this book is so good is because Brian Jacques uses very descriptive adjectives and excellent verbs as illustrations for every scene. The story builds up suspense. Throughout, it never contradicts itself. The story is very vivid. Salamandstron is not just a book, which might be ok to glance over; it is a must-read saga.

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