# Contents

*Acknowledgements* ix

**Introduction** 1

1. **On the Nature and Value of Promises** 7
   - Fried’s Argument: Convention, Social Practice, Trust 8
   - Trust as a Condition 14
   - Why Promise? 20
   - Why Want a Promise? 21
   - What is Wrong with Breaking a Promise? 22
   - The Value of Promise 27
   - Promises between Strangers 29

2. **Normativity, Trust and Threats** 33
   - I. The Disjunctive View 33
     - Threats and Expressive Reasons 37
     - Threats and Trust 39
     - The Willingness to Assume the Risk of Disobedience 46
     - Threats and Exclusionary Reasons 49
   - II. Normativity and Threats in Personal Relations 51
     - Coercive and Non-Coercive Threats 51
     - From Threats to Enforceability 54

3. **The Nature and Value of Contractual Relations** 57
   - I. Contracts and the Role of Trust 57
     - Enforceability and the Trivialisation of the Role of Trust 57
     - Trust and the True Nature of the Practice 61
     - Preview 65
   - II. Contracts, Promises and Special Relations 65
     - What is Special in Special Relations? 66
     - Contracts, Promises and Special Relations 72
     - The Intrinsic Value of Contracts 78
     - Personal Detachment and Relational Contracts 80
     - Preview 86
4. Remedies

The Standard Remedy and the Theory of the Practice 89
Choosing a Performance Remedy: Why Not Specific Performance? 95
The Harm Principle and Remedies for Breach 100
Mitigation 109
The Freedom to Change One’s Mind 112

5. Freedom of Contract, Freedom from Contract 117

I. Freedom of Contract 117
   Neutrality 121
      Neutrality, Fairness and Inequality of Bargaining Power 122
      The Possibility of Neutrality 123
   Personal Autonomy 126
      Preliminaries 127
      Autonomy-Derived Value as a Matter of Degree 128
      Respect for Autonomy as Ground for Restricting Freedom 129
      The Value of Autonomy and the Pursuit of the Good 131
      Autonomy, Contract and Promise 133
   Conclusion 135

II. Freedom from Contract 135
   Intention to Create Legal Relations 136

Bibliography 143

Index 147