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Victorian novels, Garrett Stewart argues, hurtle forward in prose as violent as the brutal human existence they chronicle. In *Novel Violence*, he explains how such language assaults the norms of written expression and how, in doing so, it counteracts the narratives it simultaneously propels.

Immersing himself in the troubling plots of Charles Dickens, Anne Brontë, George Eliot, and Thomas Hardy, Stewart uses his brilliant new method of narratology to trace the microplots of language as they unfold syllable by syllable. By pinpointing where these linguistic narratives collide with the stories that give them context, he makes a powerful case for the centrality of verbal conflict to the experience of reading Victorian novels. He also maps his finely wrought argument on the spectrum of influential theories of the novel—including those of Georg Lukács and Ian Watt—and tests it against Edgar Allan Poe's antinovelistic techniques. In the process, Stewart shifts critical focus toward the grain of narrative and away from more abstract analyses of structure or cultural context, revealing how novels achieve their semantic and psychic effects and unearthing, in prose, something akin to poetry.