

*Too Close to the Edge* by Pascal Garnier

- In an interview with French magazine *Encres Vagabondes*, Garnier said, 'It's when life trips you up that fate can totter in another direction. Five minutes before jabbing a knife into his victim's back a criminal is still an innocent man. It's what causes fate to totter that interests me.' What causes fate to totter in *Too Close to the Edge*? To what extent are the characters doomed to their fate?
- 'Garnier's characters tend to isolate themselves from the present in ways or places that seem to protect them but are ultimately fatal.' How is this observation by writer John Taylor for *The Arts Fuse* true of *Too Close to the Edge*?
- Can Pascal Garnier's writing be properly described as 'noir'?
- To what extent is Pascal Garnier an existentialist or philosophical writer?
- To what extent is Garnier's writing a critique of bourgeois life?
- By giving Étienne and Éliette such similar names, is Garnier suggesting a parallel between them? If so, what is it they have in common?
- Why do you think Garnier is drawn to writing about older people, as he does too in *Moon in a Dead Eye*, for example?
- Garnier has been described as displaying 'gallows humour'. Did you find *Too Close to the Edge* funny?
- 'The style of my writing, as it has been described – concise, with a liking for certain set phrases – is not something I chose,' said Pascal Garnier in an interview with *Encres Vagabondes*. Garnier came to writing relatively late in life, having begun by writing songs because, he said, he couldn't spell and he could write them using conversational language. He went on to write short stories, using the present tense to avoid problems with conjugating verbs. What is the effect of Garnier's pared-back style of writing?