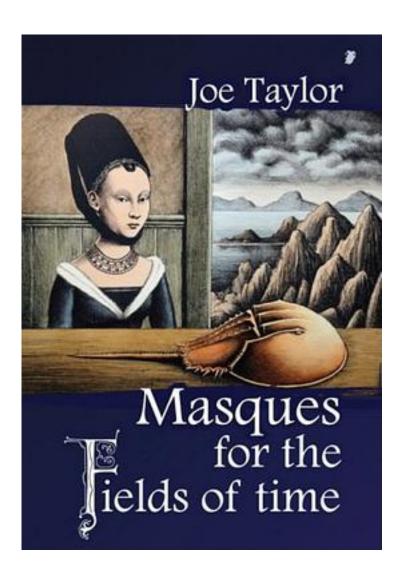
Masques for the Fields of Time



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Skewed, that word best describes the characters, situations, and timeframes in this

collection, A Masque for the Fields of Time. Take the opening story, where a dance seems to be happening during the narrator's youth, since his baby-sitter is busily flirting on the dance floor with another teenager. But then time skews and the dance is happening -- when? And those puppets in the rafters, seemingly pulling strings on all the dancers -- just what are they doing? Well, maybe the collection's last story will clear things up . . . or does it only skew matters further, for this story's protagonist is swimming, yes swimming, on a mission to obtain headstones -- now irritatingly called "grave markers," the narrator complains. Okay then, in another story we at least have the comfort of Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus confronting Simone de Beauvoir -- but then why do tiny voices haunt the professed atheistic trio with religious barbs? With humor both grim and playful, all the stories in this c