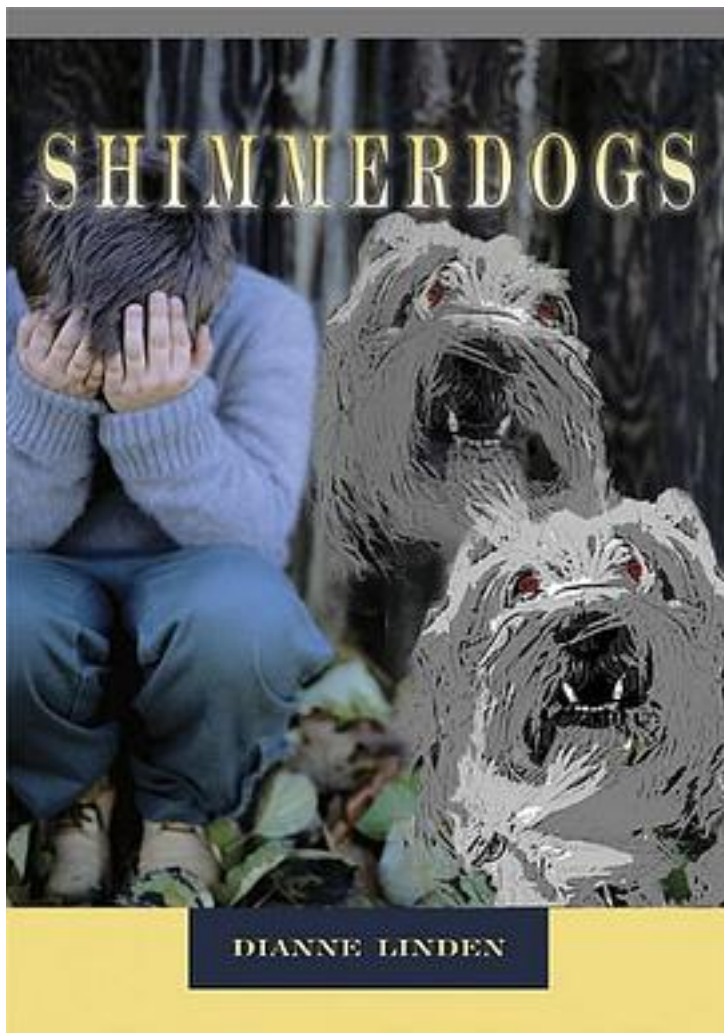


Shimmerdogs



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"Shimmerdogs" is the story of young Lester B. Hopkins - Mike to almost everyone

except his mother, Master Corporal Alice Mackelwain. He is just a boy trying to make sense of his own world that is ever more complicated by the intrusion of the world of his absent soldiering mother. Mike is very worried about his mother's safety while she is in Bosnia. He, like his sister, gets caught up in his mother's tragic stories like the one of a little boy named Edin, whose daily life includes the nightmares of the violence and terror of war. Mike wonders how to make sense of it all, how to step outside the fears he harbours and the unanswered questions he has. Stumbling upon a book he finds in the library that describes the ancient belief that dogs guard the doorways to death, he begins to shape an understanding of his troubles. Wasn't he brought back to life by a shimmering white dog with "jewellery eyes" who saved him from drowning? The connections become more apparent when Mike's dog, Merit, disappears, and he reasons she is on some kind of peacekeeping mission like his mother. Then he meets Jozef Lapinski, an elderly neighbour who has his own miraculous dog story from World War II. The pieces of his puzzling life are taking shape and he knows something but he cannot name it. Despite the admonishments of his teen sister, Nell, who is concerned about the effect of his rampant imagination on their mother, Mike pursues his instincts. As his self-doubt continues to diminish and his trust in his imagination guides his mind to make sense of what he knows, he sees more and more evidence of what he believes is true - that spirit or shimmer dogs are rescuing people from the very real dangers of our world. And for Mike, this is all the more reason to invent agents of protection for his family - or be assisted by them, whichever the case may be.

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