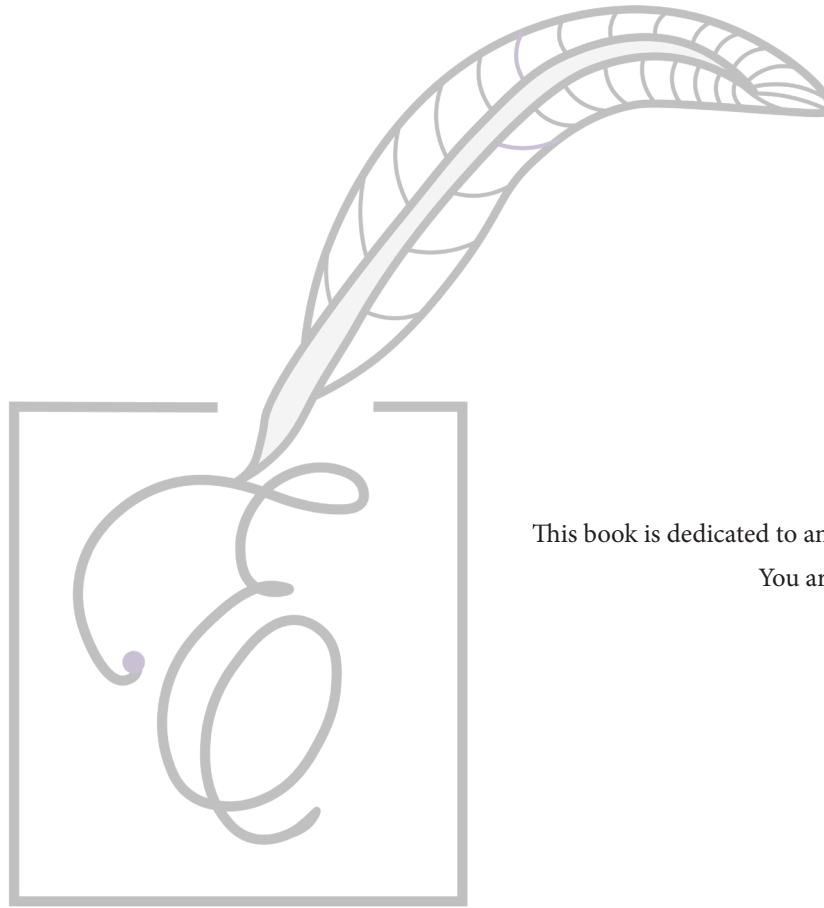


# UNDER WATER

*Stories*

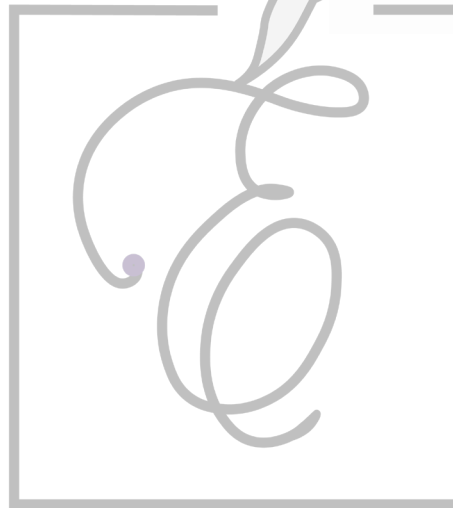
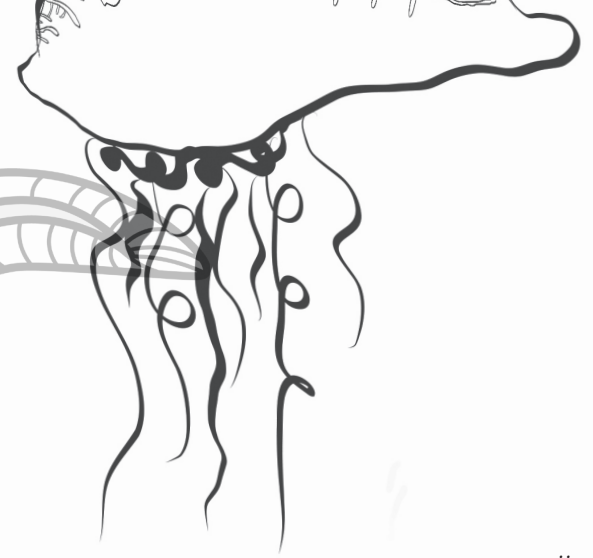
Diana Elizabeth Clarke





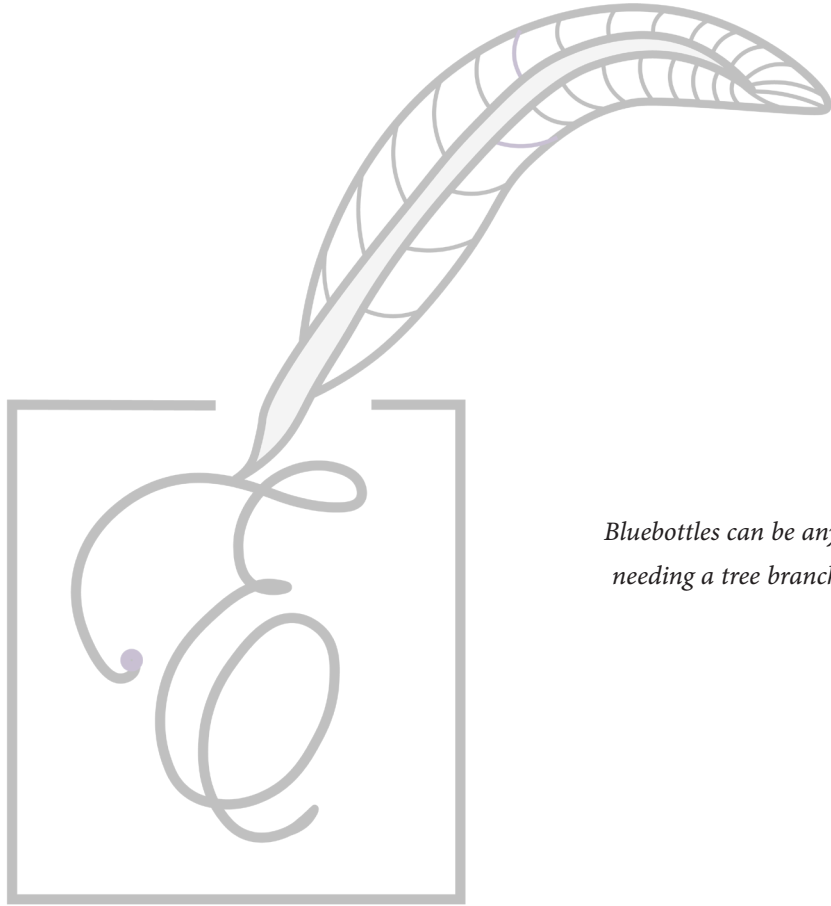
This book is dedicated to anyone who has ever felt alone.  
You are loved.

**PREVIEW**



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# PREVIEW



*Bluebottles can be anywhere, such as a leaf  
needing a tree branch to not wilt and die.*

# PREVIEW





## Flight of the Leaf

A soft wind rumbled . . . and a leaf lost in the clouds looked for a new home. It was a summer afternoon with green brightness atop trees that danced and sang together with the accompaniment of the whistling breeze. For a leaf lost in the sky, it drifted and wandered above the world. Its new friends were the birds who were once chirping and hopping on the leaf's motherly branches. The leaf soared alongside the wingful creatures—all thanks to the wind.

Morning dew had not yet left the leaf's bright green skin as it twirled, curled, and flew. It crashed through the whipped white cotton of the heavens and shinned underneath the burning sunlight. Never before had the leaf been this close to so much warmth. With each wing flap of a nearby bird, the more the leaf twirled in the sky; off it flew into a path the leaf was destined to complete. Down and scraping the clouds to up and touching the daytime star, the leaf glided where the world took it.

The leaf's dew was now gone, completely dried off as the wind sang louder against the nimble leaf. As if an angry man blew a whistle against its stem, the leaf swam down the sky uncontrollably. It swerved between building after building and scraped against brick and metal.

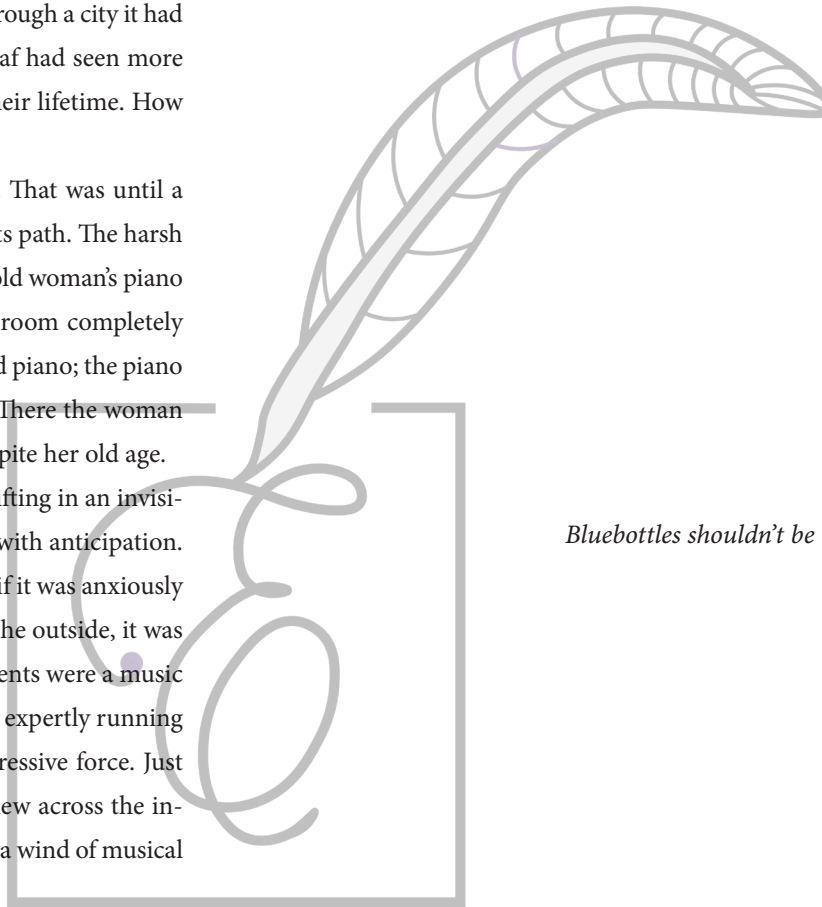
PREVIEW

Stronger the wind went and faster did the leaf fly through a city it had never been fortunate enough to see before. This leaf had seen more in the past minute than many trees could see in their lifetime. How was it so lucky?

Wingless . . . the leaf soared like never before. That was until a simple window made of a slick glass stopped it in its path. The harsh wind pushed the leaf against the window of a little old woman's piano studio. Glued to the glass, the leaf faced a quaint room completely empty except for the woman and a black baby grand piano; the piano had no room to breathe against the narrow walls. There the woman sat with her back sitting straight up and strong despite her old age.

Her pianist's hands floated above the keys—drifting in an invisible current—with a limp wrist and fingers itching with anticipation. The leaf stood fiercely against the window glass, as if it was anxiously waiting for the woman to play some music. From the outside, it was impossible to hear any notes, but her hand movements were a music all on their own. The leaf laid witness to her fingers expertly running over the black and white keys with a soft, yet aggressive force. Just how the leaf flew in the sky, the woman's fingers flew across the instrument as if she controlled her own kind of wind; a wind of musical essence and fluttering fingers.

The leaf slowly slipped down the window; the woman began to inch out of view. And all the while, the music stopped. Her fingers quivered—paused over the keys. A frown lingered on the old woman's face as she plopped her hands down into her lap. Clinging to the window now, the leaf got one last look at the woman; tears cascaded down her cheeks as she sat frozen on her piano bench. The wind helped the leaf whisper goodbye before it tumbled down to the city street below.



*Bluebottles shouldn't be left to fend for themselves.*

PREVIEW

