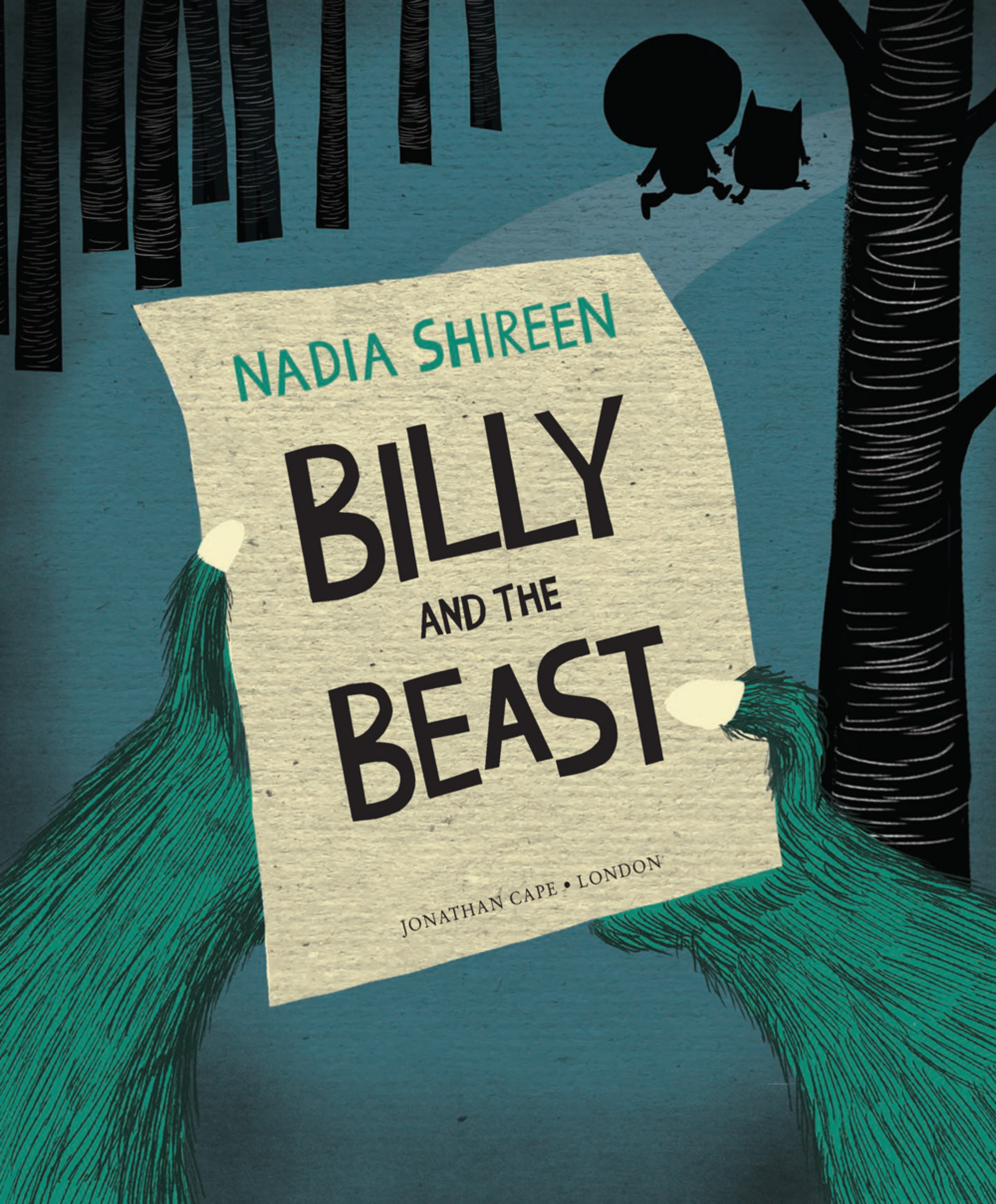

NADIA SHIREEN
BILLY
AND THE
BEAST
JONATHAN CAPE • LONDON



For Noah.
And for girls with big hair.

Special thanks to Andrea MacDonald,
Helen Mackenzie Smith and James Stevens.

JONATHAN CAPE

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Billy and Fatcat were walking through the forest,
which was something they liked to do now and then.



They stomped . . .



and crunched . . .



and splashed . . .



and jumped.



They said Hello to Hedgehog . . .





Hello to Fox . . .



Hello to the mice . . .



And Hello to the adorable little bunny rabbits.





It was a perfectly lovely day.
But suddenly there was a TERRIBLE RUMBLE . . .

It was Fatcat's tummy.
"Uh-oh," said Billy,
who knew he'd need a snack
as soon as possible.

So she rummaged
around in her hair.



Billy kept all sorts of stuff in her hair. It was very
useful for stashing things in. Like doughnuts.
"Here you go, Fatcat," she said. "Snacks!"

Then Billy and Fatcat
walked back through the forest.
They said goodbye to
Hedgehog . . .

Oh! Hang on . . .
Where was Hedgehog?

Where
was Fox?

Where were
the mice?

And where were
the adorable little
bunny rabbits?

But before Billy
had a chance to say "How strange" . . .

EVERYTHING
WENT
DARK.



"Hey!" shouted Billy.
"Whoever you are, you'd better let us out of here . . .
RIGHT NOW!"



Billy and Fatcat
were dumped on
the ground with
a THUD.
And they saw . . .
a very big THING.

"Who are you?" asked Billy.
"I am a
TERRIBLE BEAST!"
said the
Terrible Beast.