

You give the bald man your explanation, keeping a straight face, wondering if you could pass a lie-detector test.

"Tak, tak," the bald man says. "I'm very disappointed in you. It's true that we haven't decoded the whalesong, but we have learned something about it. We've learned that it's just the opposite of a warning, for the first part of it is come or follow. So, Jonah, there is, you must know, only one consequence of lying to us . . ."

As he levels his automatic at you, you realize this is . . .

### The End

