



Library podcast

Virtual Thrilling Tales: *This World is Taboo* Chapter 6

[00:00:00] Hello and welcome to Thrilling Tales: Seattle Public Library's Story Time for Grownups this is the virtual edition. And, this is chapter six, that is episode six, of *This World is Taboo* by Murray Leinster. I am your librarian reader, David Wright. Thrilling Tales happens live at the downtown Library, twice monthly, it's a noon-hour program, happens there in the auditorium, but we are not doing that now, and so we decided to do some of these virtually. There will be a few more of these episodes of this classic science-fiction pulp serial about a pariah planet by Murray Leinster. After that, we hope to start bringing you short stories. So, without any further ado we bring you chapter six of *This World is Taboo* by Murray Leinster.

[00:00:55] A large part of the firmament was blotted out by the blindingly bright half-disk of Weald, as it shone in the sunshine. It had icecaps at its poles, and there were seas, and the mottled look of land which had that carefully maintained balance of woodland and cultivated areas which was so effective in climate control. The Med Ship floated free, and Calhoun fretfully monitored all the beacon frequencies known to man.

[00:01:24] There was relative silence inside the ship. Maril watched Calhoun in a sort of despairing indecision. The four young blueskins still slept, still bound hand and foot upon the control room floor. Murgatroyd regarded them, and Maril, and Calhoun in turn, and his small and furry forehead wrinkled helplessly.

[00:01:48] "They can't have landed what I'm looking for!" protested Calhoun as his search had no result. "They can't! It would be too sensible for them to have done it!"

[00:01:57] Murgatroyd said "Chee!" in a subdued voice.

[00:02:02] "But where the devil did they put them?" demanded Calhoun. "A polar orbit would be ridiculous! They—" Then he grunted in disgust. "Oh! Of course! Now, where's the landing-grid?"

[00:02:15] He worked busily for minutes, checking the position of the Wealdian landing-grid, which was mapped in the Sector Directory, against the look of continents and seas on the half-disk so plainly visible outside. He found what he wanted. He put on the ship's solar system drive.

[00:02:31] "I wish," he complained to Maril, "I wish I could think straight the first time! And it's so obvious! If you want to put something out in space, and not have it interfere with traffic, in what sort of orbit and at what distance will you put it?"

[00:02:44] Maril did not answer.

[00:02:46] "Obviously," said Calhoun, "you'll put it as far as possible from the landing-pattern of ships coming into the spaceport. You'll put it on the opposite side of the planet. And you'll want it to stay out of the way, where anybody can know it is at any time of the day or night without having to calculate anything.

[00:03:02] "So you'll put it out in orbit so it will revolve around Weald in exactly one day, neither more nor less, and you'll put it above the equator. And then it will remain quite stationary above one spot on the planet, a hundred and eighty degrees longitude away from the landing-grid and directly over the equator."

[00:03:26] He scribbled for a moment.

[00:03:28] "Which means forty-two thousand miles high, give or take a few hundred, and—here! And I was hunting for it in a close-in orbit!"

[00:03:39] He grumbled to himself. He waited while the solar-system drive pushed the Med Ship a quarter of the way around the bright planet below. The sunset line vanished and the planet's disk became a complete circle. Then Calhoun listened to the monitor earphones again, and grunted once more, and changed course, and presently made a noise indicating satisfaction.

[00:04:01] He abandoned instrument control and peered directly out of a port, handling the solar system drive with great care. Murgatroyd said depressedly, "Chee!"

[00:04:13] "Stop worrying," commanded Calhoun. "We haven't been challenged, and there is a beacon transmitter at work, just to make sure that nobody bumps into what we're looking for. It's a great help, because we do want to bump, but gently."

[00:04:29] Stars swung across the port out of which he looked. Something dark appeared, and then straight lines and exact curvings. Even Maril, despairing and bewildered as she was, caught sight of something vastly larger than the Med Ship, floating in space. She stared. The Med Ship maneuvered very cautiously. She saw another large object. A third. A fourth. There seemed to be dozens of them. They were spaceships, huge by comparison with Aesclipus Twenty. They floated as the Med Ship did. They did not drive. They were not in formation. They were not at even distances from each other.

[00:05:15] They did not point in the same direction. They swung in emptiness like derelicts.

[00:05:22] Calhoun jockeyed his small ship with infinite care. Presently there came the gentlest of impacts and then a clanking sound. The appearance out the vision port became stationary, but still unbelievable. The Med Ship was grappled magnetically to a vast surface of welded metal. Calhoun relaxed. He opened a wall panel and brought out a vacuum suit. He began briskly to get it on.

[00:05:51] "Things moving smoothly," he commented. "We weren't challenged. So it's extremely unlikely that we were spotted. Our friends on the floor ought to begin to come to shortly. And I'm going to find out now whether I'm a hero or in sure-enough trouble!"

[00:06:07] Maril said drearily, "I don't know what you've done, except—"

[00:06:12] Calhoun blinked at her, in the act of hauling the vacuum suit up his chest and over his shoulders.

[00:06:17] "Isn't it self-evident?" he demanded. "I've been giving astrogration lessons to these characters. I certainly didn't do it to help them dump germ-cultures on Weald! I brought them here! Don't you see the point? These are space ships. They're in orbit around Weald. They're not manned and they're not controlled. In fact, they're nothing but sky-riding storage bins!"

[00:06:42] He seemed to consider the explanation complete. He wriggled his arms into the sleeves and gloves of the suit. He slung the air tanks over his shoulder and hooked them to the suit.

[00:06:52] "I'll be back," he said. "I hope with good news. I've reason to be hopeful, though, because these Wealdians are very practical men. They have things all prepared and tidy. I suspect I'll find these ships with stores of air and fuel, maybe even food, so that if Weald should manage to make a deal for the stuff stored out here in them, they'd only have to bring out crews."

[00:07:14] He lifted the space helmet down from its rack and put it on. He tested it, reading the tank air-pressure, power-storage, and other data from the lighted miniature instruments visible through pinholes above his eye-level. He fastened a space rope about himself, speaking through the helmet's opened faceplate.

[00:07:34] "If our friends should wake up before I get back," he added, "please restrain them. I'd hate to be marooned."

[00:07:43] He went waddling into the airlock with the coil of space rope over one vacuum-suited arm. The inner lock door closed behind him. A little later Maril heard the outer lock open. Then silence.

[00:08:00] Murgatroyd whimpered a little. Maril shivered. Calhoun had gone out of the ship to nothingness. He'd said that what he was looking for, and what he'd found, was forty-two thousand miles from Weald. One could imagine falling forty-two thousand miles, where one couldn't imagine falling a light-year.

[00:08:23] Calhoun was walking on the steel plates of a gigantic spaceship which floated among dozens of its fellows, all seeming derelicts and seemingly abandoned. He was able to walk on the nearest because of magnetic-soled shoes. He trusted his life to them and to a flimsy space rope which trailed after him out the Med Ship's airlock.

[00:08:47] Time passed. A clock ticked in that hurried tempo of five ticks to the second which has been the habit of clocks since time immemorial. Very small and trivial noises came from the background tape, preventing utter silence from hanging intolerably in the ship.

[00:09:05] Maril found herself listening tensely for something else. One of the four bound blueskins snored, and stirred, and slept again. Murgatroyd gazed about unhappily, and swung down to the control room floor, and then paused for lack of any place to go or anything to do. He sat down and began half-heartedly to lick his whiskers. Maril stirred.

[00:09:34] Murgatroyd looked at her hopefully.

[00:09:35] "Chee?" he asked shrilly.

[00:09:38] She shook her head. It became a habit to act as if Murgatroyd were a human being. "No," she said unsteadily. "Not yet."

[00:09:47] More time passed. An unbearably long time. Then there was the faintest of clankings. It repeated. Then, abruptly, there were noises in the airlock. They continued. They were fumbling noises.

[00:10:01] The outer airlock door closed. The inner door opened. Dense white fog came out of it. There was motion. Calhoun followed the fog out of the lock. He carried objects which had been weightless, but were suddenly heavy in the ship's gravity-field. There were two spacesuits and a curious assortment of parcels. He spread them out, flipped aside his faceplate, and said briskly, "This stuff is cold! Turn a heater on it, will you, Maril?"

[00:10:29] He began to work his way out of his own vacuum-suit.

[00:10:34] "Item," he said. "The ships are fuelled and provisioned. A practical tribe, the Wealdians! The ships are ready to take off as soon as they're warmed up inside. A half-degree sun doesn't radiate heat enough to keep a ship warm, when the rest of the cosmos is effectively near zero Kelvin. Here, point the heaters like this."

[00:10:53] He adjusted the radiant-heat dispensers. The fog disappeared where their beams played. But the metal spacesuits glistened and steamed, and the steam disappeared within inches. They were so completely and utterly cold that they condensed the air about them as a liquid, which re-evaporated to make fog, which warmed up and disappeared and was immediately replaced.

[00:11:15] "Item," said Calhoun again, getting his arms out of the vacuum-suit sleeves. "The controls are pretty nearly standard. Our sleeping friends will be able to astrogate them back to Dara without trouble, provided only that nobody comes out here to bother us before they leave."

[00:11:32] He shed the last of the spacesuit, stepping out of its legs.

[00:11:36] "And," he finished wryly, "I brought back an emergency supply of ship provisions for everybody concerned, but find that I'm idiot enough to feel that they'll choke me if I eat them while Dara's still starving."

[00:11:50] Maril said, "But there isn't any hope for Dara! No real hope!"

[00:11:57] He gaped at her.

[00:12:00] "What do you think we're here for?"

[00:12:02] He set to work to restore his four recent students to consciousness. It was not a difficult task. The dosage mixed in the coffee given them as a graduation ceremony—the ceremony which had consisted solely of drinking coffee and passing out—allowed for waking-up processes. Calhoun took the precaution of disarming them first, but presently four hot-eyed young men glared at him.

[00:12:29] "I'm calling," said Calhoun, holding a blaster negligently in his hand, "I'm calling for volunteers. There's a famine on Dara. There've been unmanageable crop surpluses on Weald. On Dara, the government grimly rations every ounce of food. On Weald, the government has been buying surplus grain to keep the price up.

[00:12:54] "To save storage costs, it's loaded the grain into out-of-date spaceships it once used to stand sentry over Dara to keep it out of space when there was another famine there. Those ships have been put out in orbit, where we're hooked on to one of them.

[00:13:12] "It's loaded with half a million bushels of grain. I've brought spacesuits from it, I've turned on the heaters in its interior, and I've set its overdrive unit for a hop to Dara. Now I'm calling for volunteers to take half a million bushels of grain to where it's needed. Do I get any volunteers?"

[00:13:35] He got four. Not immediately, because they were ashamed that he'd made it impossible to carry out their original fanatic plan, and now offered something much better to make up for it. They raged. But half a million bushels of grain meant that people who must otherwise die might live. Ultimately, truculently, first one and then another angrily agreed.

[00:14:04] "Good!" said Calhoun. "Now, how many of you dare risk the trip alone? I've got one grain ship warming up. There are plenty of others around us. Every one of you can take a ship and half a million bushels to Dara, if you have the nerve!"

[00:14:24] The atmosphere changed. Suddenly they clamored for the task he offered them. They were still acutely uncomfortable. He'd bossed them and taught them until they felt capable and glamorous and proud. Then he'd pinned their ears back. But if they returned to Dara with four enemy ships and unimaginable quantities of food with which to break the famine....

[00:14:51] There was work to be done first, of course. Only one ship was so far warming up. Three more had to be entered, in spacesuits, and each had to have its interior warmed so breathable air could exist inside it, and at least part of the stored provisions had to be brought up to reasonable temperature for use on the journey.

[00:15:10] Then the overdrive unit had to be inspected and set for the length of journey that a direct overdrive hop to Dara would mean, and Calhoun had to make sure again that each of the four could identify Dara's sun under all circumstances and aim for it with the requisite high precision, both before going into overdrive and after breakout. When all that was accomplished, Calhoun might reasonably hope that they'd arrive. But it wasn't a certainty.

[00:15:40] Still, presently his four students shook hands with him, with the fine tolerance of young men intending much greater achievements than their teacher. They wouldn't speak on communicator again, because their messages might be picked up on Weald.

[00:15:56] Of course, for this high heroic action to be successful, it had to be performed with the stealth of sneak-thieves.

[00:16:04] What seemed a long time passed. The one ship turned slowly upon some unseen axis. It wavered back and forth, seeking a point of aim. A second twisted in its place. A third put on the barest trace of solar system drive to get clear of the rest. The fourth—

[00:16:29] One ship vanished. It had gone into overdrive, heading for Dara at many times the speed of light. Another. Two more.

[00:16:39] That was all. The remainder of the fleet hung clumsily in emptiness. And Calhoun worriedly went over in his mind the lessons he'd given in such a pathetically small number of days. If the four ships reached Dara, their pilots would be heroes. Calhoun had presented them with that estate over their bitter objection. But they would glory in it—if they reached Dara.

[00:17:08] Maril looked at him with very strange eyes.

[00:17:13] "Now what?" she asked.

[00:17:16] "We hang around," said Calhoun, "to see if anybody comes up from Weald to find out what's happened. It's always possible to pick up a sort of signal when a ship goes into overdrive. Usually it doesn't mean a thing. Nobody pays any attention. But if somebody comes out here...."

[00:17:32] "What?"

[00:17:33] "It'll be regrettable," said Calhoun. He was suddenly very tired. "It'll spoil any chance of our coming back and stealing some more food, like interstellar mice. If they find out what we've done they'll expect us to try it again. They might get set to fight. Or they might simply land the rest of these ships."

[00:17:54] "If I'd realized what you were about," said Maril, "I'd have joined in the lessons. I could have piloted a ship."

[00:18:02] "You wouldn't have wanted to," said Calhoun. He yawned. "You wouldn't want to be a heroine."

[00:18:08] "You don't seem to be trying to be a hero!" she protested.

[00:18:13] "I'd enjoy it," admitted Calhoun, "but I have a job to do. It's got to be done. It's more important than being admired."

[00:18:20] "You could take another ship back," she told him. "It would be worth more to Dara than the Med Ship is! And then everybody would realize that you'd planned everything."

[00:18:31] "Ah," said Calhoun, "but you've no idea how much this ship matters to Dara!"

[00:18:37] He seated himself at the controls. He slipped headphones over his ears. He listened. Very, very carefully, he monitored all the wave lengths and wave forms he could discover in use on Weald. There was no mention of the oddity of behavior of shiploads of surplus grain aloft. There was no mention of the ships at all. There was plenty of mention of Dara, and blueskins, and of the vicious political fight now going on to see which political party could promise the most complete protection against blueskins.

[00:19:11] After a full hour of it, Calhoun flipped off his receptor and swung the Med Ship to an exact, painstakingly precise aim at the sun around which Dara rolled. He said, "Overdrive coming, Murgatroyd!"

[00:19:27] Murgatroyd grabbed. The stars went out and the universe reeled and the Med Ship became a sort of cosmos all its own, into which no signal could come, no danger could enter, and in which there could be no sound except those minute ones made to prevent silence. Calhoun yawned again.

[00:19:48] "Now there's nothing to be done for a day or two," he said wearily, "and I'm beginning to understand why people sleep all they can, on Dara. It's one way not to feel hungry. And one dreams such delicious meals! But looking hungry is a social requirement, on Dara."

[00:20:08] Maril said tensely, "You're going back? After they took the ship from you?"

[00:20:15] "The job's not finished," he explained. "Not even the famine's ended, and the famine's a second-order effect. If there were no such thing as a blueskin, there'd be no famine. Food could be traded for. We've got to do something to make sure there are no more famines."

[00:20:34] She looked at him oddly.

[00:20:36] "It would be desirable," she said with irony. "But you can't do it."

[00:20:41] "Not today, no," he admitted. Then he said longingly, "I didn't get much sleep on the way here, while running a seminar on astrogation. I think I'll take a nap."

[00:20:54] She rose and almost ostentatiously went into the other cabin, to leave him alone. He shrugged. He settled down into the chair which, to let a Med Ship man break the monotony of life in unchanging surroundings, turned into a comfortable sleeping arrangement. He fell instantly asleep. For very many ship-hours, then, there was no action or activity or happening of any imaginable consequence in the Med Ship. Very, very far away, light-years distant and light-years apart, four shiploads of grain hurtled toward the famine-stricken planet of blueskins. Each great ship had a single semiskilled blueskin for pilot and crew.

[00:21:44] Thousands of millions of suns blazed with violence appropriate to their stellar types in a galaxy of which a very small proportion had been explored and colonized by humanity. The human race was now to be counted in quadrillions on scores of hundreds of inhabited worlds, but the tiny Med Ship seemed the least significant of all possible created things.

[00:22:11] It could travel between star-systems and even star-clusters, but it was not yet capable of crossing the continent of suns on which the human race arose. And between any two solar systems the journeying of the Med Ship consumed much time. Which would be maddening for someone with no work to do or no resources in himself, or herself.

[00:22:37] On the second ship-day Calhoun labored painstakingly and somewhat distastefully at the little biological laboratory. Maril watched him in a sort of brooding silence. Murgatroyd slept much of the time, with his furry tail wrapped meticulously across his nose.

[00:22:55] Toward the end of the day Calhoun finished his task. He had a matter of six or seven cubic centimeters of clear liquid as the conclusion of a long process of culturing, and examination by microscope, and again culturing plus final filtration. He looked at a clock and calculated time.

[00:23:16] "Better wait until tomorrow," he observed, and put the bit of clear liquid in a temperature-controlled place of safekeeping.

[00:23:24] "What is it?" asked Maril. "What's it for?"

[00:23:28] "It's part of a job I have on hand," said Calhoun. He considered. "How about some music?"

[00:23:35] She looked astonished. But he set up an instrument and fed microtape into it and settled back to listen. Then there was music such as she had never heard before. It was another device to counteract isolation and monotonous between-planet voyages. To keep it from losing its effectiveness, Calhoun rationed himself on music, as on other things.

[00:24:02] Any indulgence frequently repeated would become a habit, in the sense that it would give no special pleasure when indulged in, but would make for stress if it were omitted. Calhoun deliberately went for weeks between uses of his recordings, so that music was an event to be looked forward to and cherished.

[00:24:23] When he tapered off the stirring symphonies of Kun Gee with tranquilizing, soothing melodies from the Rim School of composers, Maril regarded him with a very peculiar gaze indeed.

[00:24:37] "I think I understand now," she said slowly, "why you don't act like other people. Toward me, for example. The way you live gives you what other people have to get in crazy ways—making their work feed their vanity, and justify pride, and make them feel significant. But you can put your whole mind on your work."

[00:25:03] He thought it over.

[00:25:05] "Med Ship routine is designed to keep one healthy in his mind," he admitted. "It works pretty well. It satisfies all my mental appetites. But there are instincts...."

[00:25:18] She waited. He did not finish.

[00:25:22] "What do you do about the instincts that work and music and such things can't satisfy?" Calhoun grinned wryly, "I'm stern with them. I have to be."

[00:25:36] He stood up and plainly expected her to go into the other cabin for the night. She went. It was after breakfast time of the next ship-day when he got out the sample of clear liquid he'd worked so long to produce.

[00:25:52] "We'll see how it works," he observed. "Murgatroyd's handy in case of a slip-up. It's perfectly safe so long as he's aboard and there are only the two of us."

[00:26:03] She watched as he injected half a cc. under his own skin. Then she shivered a little.

[00:26:09] "What will it do?"

[00:26:11] "That remains to be seen." He paused a moment. "You and I," he said with some dryness, "make a perfect test for anything. If you catch something from me, it will be infectious indeed!"

[00:26:26] She gazed at him utterly without comprehension.

[00:26:29] He took his own temperature. He brought out the folios which were his orders, covering each of the planets he should give a standard Medical Service inspection. Weald was there. Dara wasn't. But a Med Service man has much freedom of action, even when only keeping up the routine of normal Med Service. When catching up on badly neglected operations, he necessarily has much more. Calhoun went over the folios.

[00:26:56] Two hours later he took his temperature again. He looked pleased. He made an entry in the ship's log. Two hours later yet he found himself drinking thirstily and looked more pleased still.

[00:27:10] He made another entry in the log and matter-of-factly drew a small quantity of blood from his own vein and called to Murgatroyd. Murgatroyd submitted amiably to the very trivial operation Calhoun carried out. Calhoun put away the equipment and saw Maril staring at him with a certain look of shock.

[00:27:29] "It doesn't hurt him," Calhoun explained. "Right after he's born there's a tiny spot on his flank that has the pain-nerves desensitized. Murgatroyd's all right. That's what he's for!"

[00:27:42] "But he's your friend!" said Maril.

[00:27:45] Murgatroyd, despite his small size and furriness, had all the human attributes an animal which lives with humans soon acquires. Calhoun looked at him with affection.

[00:27:56] "He's my assistant. I don't ask anything of him that I can do myself. But we're both Med Service. And I do things for him that he can't do for himself. For example, I make coffee for him."

[00:28:11] Murgatroyd heard the familiar word. He said, "Chee!"

[00:28:15] "Very well," agreed Calhoun. "We'll all have some."

[00:28:20] He made coffee. Murgatroyd sipped at the cup especially made for his little paws. Once he scratched at the place on his flank which had no pain nerves. It itched. But he was perfectly content. Murgatroyd would always be contented when he was somewhere near Calhoun.

[00:28:38] Another hour went by. Murgatroyd climbed up into Calhoun's lap and with a determined air went to sleep there. Calhoun disturbed him long enough to get an instrument out of his pocket. He listened to Murgatroyd's heartbeat, while Murgatroyd dozed.

[00:28:56] "Maril," he said. "Write down something for me. The time, and ninety-six, and one-twenty over ninety-four."

[00:29:05] She obeyed, not comprehending. Half an hour later, still not stirring to disturb Murgatroyd, he had her write down another time and sequence of figures, only slightly different from the first. Half an hour later still, a third set. But then he put Murgatroyd down, well satisfied.

[00:29:22] He took his own temperature. He nodded.

[00:29:27] "Murgatroyd and I have one more chore to do," he told her. "Would you go in the other cabin for a moment?"

[00:29:34] Disturbed, she went into the other cabin. Calhoun drew a small sample of blood from the insensitive area on Murgatroyd's flank. Murgatroyd submitted with complete confidence in the man. In ten minutes Calhoun had diluted the sample, added an anticoagulant, shaken it up thoroughly, and filtered it to clarity with all red and white corpuscles removed. Another Med Ship man would have considered that Calhoun had had Murgatroyd prepare a splendid small sample of antibody-containing serum, in case something got out of hand. It would assuredly take care of two patients.

[00:30:13] But a Med Ship man would also have known that it was simply one of those scrupulous precautions a Med Ship man takes when using cultures from store.

[00:30:23] Calhoun put the sample away and called Maril back.

[00:30:27] "It was nothing," he explained, "but you might have felt uncomfortable. We simply had a bit of Med Service routine that had to be gone through. It's all right now."

[00:30:37] He offered no further explanation. She said, "I'll fix lunch." She hesitated. "You brought some food from the first Weald ship. Do you want to—"

[00:30:48] He shook his head.

[00:30:49] "I'm squeamish," he admitted. "The trouble on Dara is Med Service fault. Before my time, but still ... I'll stick to rations until everybody eats."

[00:31:01] He watched her unobtrusively as the day went on. Presently he considered that she was slightly flushed. Shortly after the evening meal of singularly unappetizing Darian rations, she drank thirstily. He did not comment. He brought out cards and showed her a complicated game of solitaire in which mental arithmetic and expert use of probability increased one's chance of winning.

[00:31:27] By midnight she'd learned the game and played it absorbedly. Calhoun was able to scrutinize her without appearing to do so, and he was satisfied again. When he mentioned that the



Med Ship should arrive off Dara in eight hours more, she put the cards away and went into the other cabin.

[00:31:47] Calhoun wrote up the log. He added the notes that Maril had made for him, of Murgatroyd's pulse and blood pressure after the injection of the same culture that produced fever and thirstiness in himself and later, without contact with him or the culture, in Maril. He put a professional comment at the end:

[00:32:08] The culture seems to have retained its normal characteristics during long storage in the spore state. It received and reproduced rapidly. I injected .5 cc. under my skin and in less than one hour my temperature was 30.8° C. An hour later it was 30.9° C. This was its peak. It immediately returned to normal. The only other observable symptom was slightly increased thirst. Bloodpressure and pulse remained normal. The other person in the Med Ship displayed the same symptoms, in prompt and complete repetition, without physical contact.

[00:32:48] He went to sleep, with Murgatroyd curled up in his cubbyhole, his tail draped carefully over his nose.

[00:32:57] The Med Ship broke out of overdrive at 1300 hours, ship-time. Calhoun made contact with the grid and was promptly lowered to the ground.

[00:33:08] It was almost two hours later, at 1500 hours ship-time, when the people of Dara were informed by broadcast that Calhoun was to be executed immediately.

[00:33:25] Thus ends chapter six of *This World is Taboo* by Murray Leinster, part of *Thrilling Tales* Seattle Public Library's Virtual Storytime for Grown-ups. Join us for the next exciting episode soon.

