

Interviews in Cold Springs, North Carolina

by Warren G. Rochelle

Illustrated by Lali

Author's Note: "Interviews" is one tale from a cycle of stories set in an alternate universe in which the South wins the Civil War, a favorite scenario among alternate history science fiction writers. In my alternate universe, the Confederacy survives into the twentieth century, acquiring such territory as Cuba, Puerto Rico, Panama, and the Philippines. In the early 1960s, a black uprising escalates into a full-scale revolution, which results in the Confederacy's demise. In the resulting power vacuum, war breaks out in Europe between the Western Alliance and the Warsaw Pact. The Soviets engage in biological warfare, which results in the total collapse of the Northern Hemisphere. Two hundred years later, South Americans, with their partners Australia and New Zealand (and Southern Africa, but that's another story), have recovered from their own civil disorders and the longest economic depression in human history. Having re-attained a level of civilization roughly parallel to that of the real late twentieth century, Southern Hemisphere teams are making contact with the descendants of those who survived the Death (the common name for the Soviet-released plagues). "Interviews" is the story of one such contact, in eastern North Carolina.

lunes, 10 de octubre del 2163

A strange bed, a strange room, a strange house.

A strange country.

I am a stranger among strangers.

And even the language I am writing this in, English, is somewhat strange. I am fluent in the language, as I've been studying and speaking it (and Portuguese, of course) since *primaria*, but that was Pacific English – Aussie and Enzedd English. This English, the English of these people, these – what is their adjective? *Norteamericanos*, yes, but that's too general. Carolinians? North Carolinians? *Confederados*? But the Confederacy fell almost two hundred years ago, and surely its states have no more political reality now than it does. Cold Springer sounds like some sort of dog. Whatever their group name is, their English is not as I was taught: it's faster, slurred,

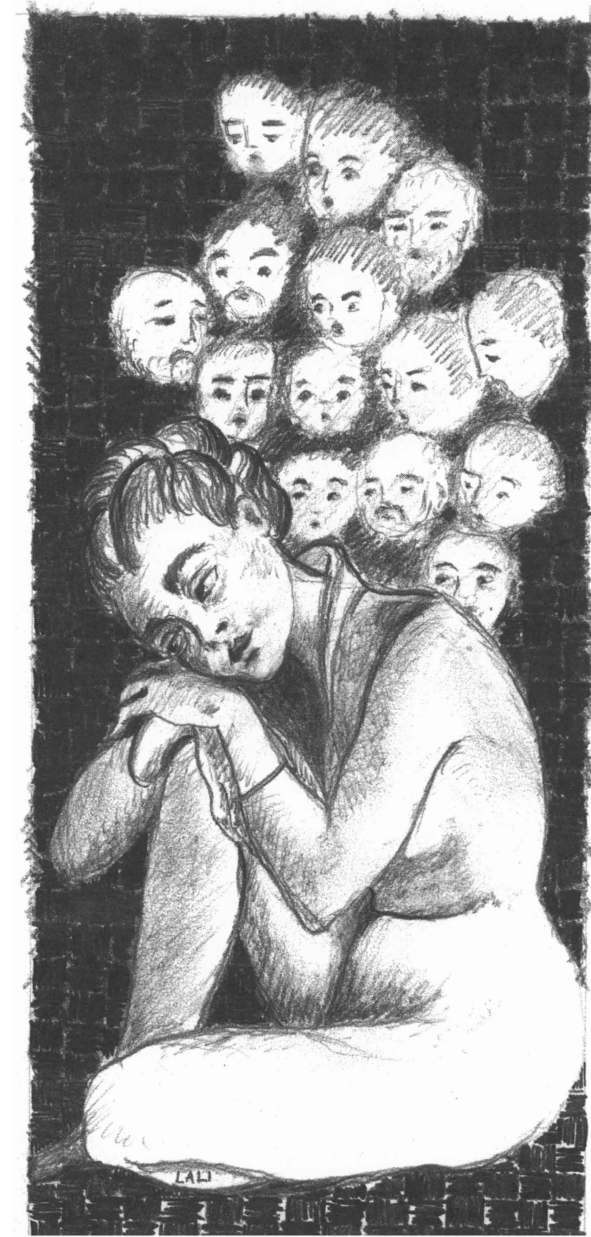


Illustration by Lali

with words on top of each other, with shifted vowels, missing consonants, and words whose definitions I have to keep asking for to enter into my handcom's translation files. For Dixie English, North Carolinian dialect, eastern variant, to make complete sense to me later, I have to first run a

**Whatever their
group name is,
their English is
not as I was
taught**