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# The Number of Utterly Alien Civilizations in "Star Trek" and "Star Wars"

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*Could beeeee . . . this little fishy's heart still beats.' So I  
run downstairs. . . .* " . . . *But,*" my Uncle Mo  
takes over "she leaves the door to the apartment open.  
This Is Important: remember. Meanwhile,  
a certain very handsome young man . . ." " . . . oh, handsome  
like a *blintz* that got run over . . ." " . . . is delivering  
a wagon of shoes from the Jewish Poor Relief Fund . . ."  
". . . shoes? it was canned goods . . ." " . . . listen  
in *your* story maybe it's canned goods, *mine* it's shoes . . ."  
". . . okay, Mr. Memory, but I'm telling you I see  
these little cans with the pears and the whaddayacallem beans  
on the labels . . ." " . . . shoes, it was shoes, it was shoes,  
up past your winkus in shoes, do you hear me . . ."  
". . . don't laugh . . ." " . . . so anyway . . ." " . . . feh! . . ." " . . . where  
was I . . ." " . . . don't interrupt . . ." " . . . and I said  
'Pardon me Miss but is this poor shivering  
cocker spaniel yours?' . . ." " . . . and here we are to tell you  
this story Fifty Years Later!" Then we always said:  
*Did you go upstairs and kiss? And they always  
never answered: "The fish, by the way, we never found."  
" So you see?" she'd add. "Nothing is hopeless."*

## THE NUMBER OF UTTERLY ALIEN CIVILIZATIONS IN *STAR TREK* AND *STAR WARS*

He *likes* to be touched—it must be  
it reminds him of his mother's nightly  
fussy tuck, her brush-of-his-cheek,  
and all of the other subsequent formative contact  
from the world: the jockly high-fives in the gym,  
an early girlfriend's sweetly-puckered smacks  
along his inner thighs . . . as if his life has licked him

into hale shape, from out of no-shape,  
like a dam bear overseeing its cub. Then  
he weds. And *she?*—well, let's say

that her childhood is a series of sudden  
physical encounters best left undetailed here.  
From these apart approaches, we can predicate  
endless scenarios, but I don't mean marriage

only. For example, on Christmas Eve in 1100,  
the Lord of the Manor of Upper Gooseholm  
adjusted his rabbit-and-squirrel-trimmed tunic  
about his girth, and at a table lit at either end  
by silver candelabra, sat to a dinner of calf brain,  
flank of deer, roast wood duck, honeyed ale,  
and upland eels simmered in buttery ewes' milk; while

the annual treat bestowed upon his villagers  
was breadsops and a slice per house of baconfat,  
most likely shared with the rats that lived in the thatching  
—a distance of style as psychologically vast across  
as is the Great Red Spot of Jupiter (“three Earths could fit  
inside it”), astronomically. When archaeologists  
spaded up the artifacts of Gooseholm,

they discovered a Roman outpost under those  
and, under *that*, the stony hints  
of an Early Bronze Age settlement still in place,  
still meaning a time and a people, as if  
the later layers above—straight up to Crazy Maisie's  
Super Pizza & Video Shack—  
were only so much weather. There's no such thing

as one planet. It's all science fiction.  
It's all a billion planets.