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

Albert Goldbarth
Could beeeeee . . . 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.”

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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.