

The Birth

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The little martian arrived today at 3:16 p.m., although the water that always portends such events broke the night before. It's a female, unmistakable. They brought it to us after checking it out, making sure it was stable, good blood gases, that sort of thing. It arrived in a clear plastic container, with wheels—but with no cover, so it could breathe. It was all wrapped up, a little package. We all agreed it was cute, but frankly none of us really knew what to do with it, so for a time we just stood around it and watched. Nothing much happened though. It just lay there with its eyes closed, moving its little mouth now and then. Finally, one of the hospital workers came in and picked it up and gave it to the mother. This caused no little excitement because we weren't sure what the mother was supposed to do with it, so we just stood around and continued watching. Finally, another one of us began taking pictures, to record the event.

"Girl" was written on a card taped to one end of the plastic container. One of the hospital workers gave the mother (and the father) some forms and told them they should write in whatever they were going to call it before taking it home.

After a while, the mother asked if anyone else wanted to hold it. The father said he did, so he did. Then one of us suggested we might try to feed it, because it came with some food—a little plastic six pack of milky something. But we couldn't decide which of us should do it. Finally, the father said he would try, but it didn't seem to want to eat, so he stopped.

Later a hospital worker came and took it away, for the night. They wanted to run more tests on it. Routine, she said. They're going to bring it back in the morning. We all went home after that, except for the mother and the father, who were allowed to spend the night. Tomorrow we're going to name it.