

This time there was something different about their arrival. Claire carried in a strange bundle that wiggled and squirmed and made funny noises. Mr. and Mrs. Duncan began to make funny noises too, sounds that Piper had never heard before. Piper knew it wasn't a rabbit or a cat or another puppy in the bundle because it didn't smell like any of these creatures. In fact, she had never smelled anything like this before. She was quite puzzled, and kept standing up on her hind feet to get a better look at what was wrapped up in the blanket.

The Duncans began to say a new word to her. “*Baby*, Piper. This is our new *baby*.”

Piper cocked her head to one side as she always did when the Duncans said something she didn't understand yet.

