Perched on a rock, she could be waiting for a bus. But if so, she could be in for an awfully long wait. This photo of what looks remarkably like a female figure with her arm outstretched, was taken on Mars.

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Call me rocky: The intriguing image captured by Nasa on Mars

Perhaps unsurprisingly, it has set the Internet abuzz with claims that there really is life on the red planet.

Others may well feel that it is simply an optical illusion caused by a landscape.

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Alien life: What seems to be a human-like Martian is pictured on Mars

The image was among many sent back to Earth by Spirit, Nasa's Mars explorer vehicle which landed there four years ago.

Initial inspections revealed nothing unusual, but closer examination by amateur astronomers has thrown up this intriguing picture.

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Painstaking: Space enthusiasts spent four years analysing this image, which on much closer inspection shows the 'alien'

As one enthusiast put it on a website: "These pictures are amazing. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw what appears to be a naked alien running around on Mars."

Another, dismissing cynicism about the somewhat stony look of the "alien", wrote: "If you show me another rock in another photo from Mars, or Earth, that naturally looks like that, I will reconsider."

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Say cheese: The mystery image was captured by Nasa's explorer vehicle, Spirit

A third contributor, who might have come closer to the majority view, said: "Ah, the human eye can be tricked so easily."

Statue of Woman Found on Mars?

By The Daily Mail
1-22-08

Does this photograph really prove that we are not alone in the universe?

Images beamed back from Mars would suggest so - although to sceptics, it could just be a strange rock formation.

Nasa's Mars Explorer Spirit sent back images from the surface of the Red Planet four years ago, and there was initial disappointment among scientists that they lacked any signs of life.