

Andorraverse Letter 10

*Andorra
Pett*



Hello and welcome to the tenth newsletter of 2026 from the Andorraverse. Your support is appreciated.

I hope you'll enjoy reading Andorra's adventures as much as I've enjoyed writing them.



If this is your first newsletter, let me explain how it all works. If you'd heard it all before, my apologies.

In these letters, I'll tell you a bit more about Andorra, where I got the ideas from, and give you some behind-the-scenes content.

By the way, if you've enjoyed your free novel, I'd be grateful for a review, or a rating.

You don't need to have bought the ebook on Amazon to leave a review or rating there.

[Review on Amazon](#)

[Review on Goodreads](#)

If you're not happy doing that, just reply to this email and tell me what you thought of it.

If you missed previous letters, you can access them here.

[The Andorraverse, Newsletter Archive](#)

Now that's out of the way, it's time to get on with this month's letter.





News.

Firstly, how I'm getting on with the first draft of *Whatever Happened to Andorra Pett?*

Not as well as I hoped.

I've had a couple of problems. First, I needed to do a lot of extra research to make the scenes in the asteroid belt sound realistic. I've also found that I have over 6k of duplicated words. I think it's because of the sporadic way I had been writing the story. It's been a mixture of dictations and bits and pieces of typing that I've added to the manuscript as ideas have come into my head.

It's knocked my total back, so I'm really only at around 53,000 words.

Even so, I'm on the final straight. My editor is booked for December the first for another job, and I've asked her if I can send her this one as part of the same booked editing slot.

As she said yes, I should have the final copy ready to publish by February 2027.

As part of the writing, I've discovered two new possible spin-off stories featuring Andorra's daughter Eva and great-granddaughter Faye, as well as a possible sequel to the actual story that I'm writing.

More news about that will follow in another letter.

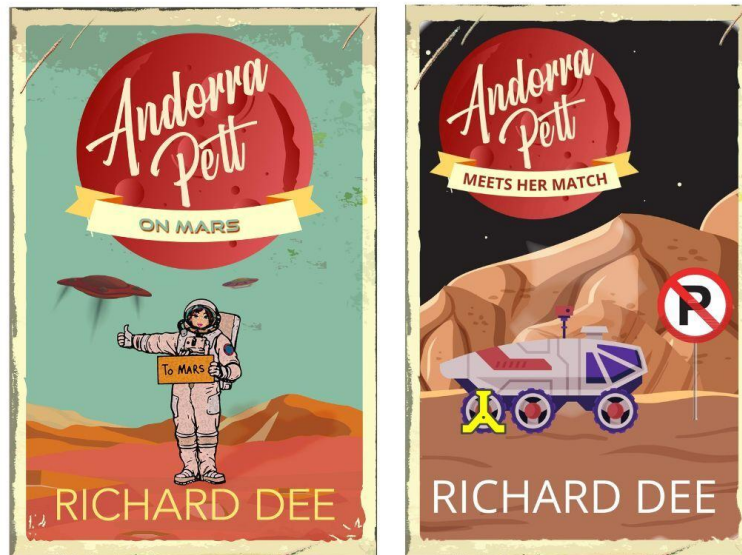
A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Andorra Pett". The script is cursive and slanted to the right.

Thanks to everyone who commented on the cover design, it looks like I'll be using the image as it is.



Extra Content.

Held over from last month, I'm discussing the worldbuilding that went into the settlement of Tharsis on Mars, the setting for her second and sixth adventures.



Andorra Pett on Mars

Andorra Pett Meets her Match

I remember reading the book *The Martian* and wondering about Mark Watney's life in the tent on Mars. It didn't feel practical for a full-scale settlement. Then I recalled a film I'd seen years ago. I don't know if any of you remember it, a light-hearted adaptation of the H.G. Wells novel *The First Men in the Moon*.

The film version was released in 1964, so I would have seen it as a child. I suspect it's been on TV a lot since then; there was also a BBC version around 2010.

In it was suggested, amongst other things, the idea of alien life living in caves on the moon, which had been sealed to keep an atmosphere

inside. When I wanted to put a settlement on Mars, I considered the idea of cave dwelling as a more permanent and safer way of living.

When I had a look around and researched the planet, I found that there were quite a few caves. They're thought to have been the result of volcanic activity a long time ago. As the three biggest volcanoes are located around the Tharsis Bulge, I put my settlement there. Now I had a location, I could set to work building a colony.

Living underground had another great advantage. It meant freedom from the possible effects of harmful radiation, because Mars has no magnetic field to deflect it away, as we have on Earth.

I never told the story of how the settlement of Tharsis was built, just that it existed as a fully functioning society, with shops, hotels, a farm, a prison and a thriving community.

Maybe that's a subject for later. I felt that much worldbuilding had no place in what was supposed to be a murder mystery.

But it must have gone something like this.

First, explorers had to find a cave and put a tent in it. They could then start growing plants in artificial solar-powered light, as Mark did. The next job would be to seal the cave and pressurise it with Martian atmosphere (which contains about 3% nitrogen).

To quickly increase the oxygen level, you could harvest some ice from the pole. This is known to contain water and carbon dioxide. If you melt the ice and crack it using solar-powered electrolysis, you obtain oxygen and hydrogen. Once you had done that for a while, the atmosphere would start to be more like something you could actually live in. You could then expand the planting outside the tent. Anything above 10% oxygen is good for most plants.

Once you got the crops going, they would photosynthesise in the artificial light to absorb CO₂ and produce oxygen. Once you had over 15%, you could live in and start extending the cave, bringing animals in to improve the soil.

You'd use things like Bamboo, Hemp, Cottonwood, Fir, Banana, and various wide-leaved palms. Plants with big (or lots of) leaves produce

a lot of oxygen and take up a lot of CO2. Shrubs like Aloe and Basil are also good to have around as they help purify air.

You need approximately one tree per person in a sealed environment to provide enough oxygen to sustain life. Of course, other plants will only help add to this.

Obviously, it would take a while to get a liveable space, but the process will accelerate as time goes by. Once you have the atmosphere, you can really get on with expansion and building a settlement.

As a bonus, any hydrogen produced from cracking the water could be used as a fuel. It's also a good thing to have as a base chemical, to use in the production of things like green steel or fuel cells.

As you can see, I thought about it a lot to make sure it was all possible. Research like that underpins the worldbuilding, which you don't see in the novel.

Next time, the bonus content will tell you a little more about the time and effort I spent designing a spaceship to carry passengers on a cruise around the planets.



A bit more about me.

I spent my working life connected with ships. Either sailing the world on them or piloting them on the River Thames.

Since I retired from full-time work, as well as writing, I read, cook and walk along the coast near my home in South Devon.

It's a beautiful part of the country.

In case you're interested, as well as Andorra Pett, I also write Science Fiction, Steampunk and Psychological Thrillers. You can find more about them by clicking the button.

Novels by Richard Dee

In case you didn't know, audio versions of the first two Andorra Pett books are also available via Audible.

You can hear chapter one of *Andorra Pett and the Oort Cloud Café* and *Andorra Pett on Mars* here.

Audiobooks.

I hope you enjoyed that. Next month, I'll be back with more news and extra content. Meanwhile, if you have any questions or just want to chat about Andorra and her world, reply to this email. I'm always happy to hear from you.

Happy Reading.

Richard.



You received this email because you subscribed to our list. You can [unsubscribe](#) at any time.

Unit 99609,
PO Box 7169,
Poole
Dorset
BH15 9EL
United Kingdom

Sent with  EmailOctopus