CONTROL ALTER DELETE · BY K.L. KETTLE

CRAFT SPOTLIGHT: READING LIKE A WRITER

"Dad's chair", up close · English · GCSE AO2 · KS3–KS4

A whole passage about grief that never once says grief. Read it as a writer: how does Kettle make you feel a loss the narrator refuses to name?

> Half awake, I shuffled across my room to my gaming hub: Dad's old game chair with its foam-picked arms. Mum had found it in the storage lockup, years after he left us. There were old coins in the creases, which was cool, like a loot crate. It used to smell of him, crisps and stale coffee. It was the safest place to be while my perception was logged into my favourite game: Altercation.
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> **From *Control Alter Delete* by K.L. Kettle.**

WHAT THE WRITING IS DOING five moves worth naming with a class

"Dad's old game chair with its foam-picked arms"

Grief arrives as an *object*, not a feeling. The worn arms carry years of use without a word about loss. **AO2 · show, don't tell**

"years after he left us"

The loss is tucked into a subordinate clause, almost in passing. What hurts most is said most quietly. **AO2 · structure / understatement**

"old coins... which was cool, like a loot crate"

A child's gaming simile softens a relic of the dead. The voice stays young; the reader feels the gap the narrator can't. **AO2 · voice & dramatic irony**

"It used to smell of him, crisps and stale coffee."

Two ordinary, un-sentimental smells do what "I miss him" never could. Specific beats stated. **AO2 · sensory imagery**

"the safest place to be"

Never "sad", never "grief". The whole passage is an emotion the narrator won't name, so the reader names it for them. **AO2 · withholding / implicit meaning**

Step back: the design.

An object, a smell, a child's simile, one buried clause. Not a single feeling-word, and it lands harder for it. **AO2 · whole-passage method**

Reading like a writer: your turn

Describe a character's feeling through one ordinary object they keep, *without naming the feeling*. Let a small, specific detail (a smell, a mark of wear, a thing left in a pocket) do the work, the way the chair does here.

For librarians and reading groups. Deciding whether to shadow, stock or recommend the book? This is the writing, not the worksheet. From Carnegie-nominated K.L. Kettle; more free resources, reading-group kits and author visits at **klkettle.com**.