

# Metaphor & Symbolism Reference Card

Module 4.1 - The Three Tools of Layered Meaning

## The Three Tools

Tool	What It Is	Why It Persuades
Metaphor	Saying one thing to mean another	Transfers emotional weight from familiar to unfamiliar
Symbolism	Objects that carry abstract meaning	Listener assigns the meaning — self-persuasion
Subtext	Meaning between the words	Respects listener's intelligence — 'I trust you'

## Controlling Metaphor

A single metaphor that runs through your entire story, unifying it.

Step	Question
1. Emotional core	What is the core emotion of your story? (loss, betrayal, hope, awakening)
2. Concrete image	What image from your listener's world embodies that emotion?
3. Throughline test	Can it appear at the beginning, middle, and end without being forced?

## Archetype-Specific Metaphors

Archetype	Metaphors That Land	Symbols That Resonate
Country Raised	Land, seasons, weather, roots, fences	Porch, boots, soil
Pragmatist	Systems, machinery, equations, recipes	Data, labels, receipts
Protector	Shields, nests, doorways, locks	Kitchen table, lunchbox
Idealist	Fire, waves, bridges, seeds	Protest signs, sunrise
Traditionalist	Roots, foundations, heirlooms, almanacs	Church bells, old photos

## The Heavy-Handedness Test

Layered (good)	Heavy-Handed (bad)
One controlling metaphor	Five metaphors competing
The listener finds the meaning	The writer shoves it
Trust	Desperation

**The Rule:** One controlling metaphor. One or two symbols. Let the subtext breathe.

