



## Fishing for an Agent?

By Molly Blaisdell

**Choosing the right lake to fish on.** This is all about your research. You need to know what editors like and back track to the agents they use on a regular basis. Hey, you need to know where the fish you want lives

**Doing things differently than the crowd.** Be yourself in your queries. Be original but don't weird. No presents and candy. Unless you really do give presents and candy to everyone anyway.

**Live bait.** You need to write an original, only you can write it book. Don't write about vampires because everyone else is. Don't give up on historical fiction because everyone says it's dead. This is really important. Learn your craft. Copy edit your work.

**Using the right gear.** Ah, I've done this before. If you are fishing for a big NY publisher, snag an agent, if you don't you will probably see a broken opportunity or a low advance or some other such stuff.

**Anchoring or beaching your boat.** Believe in you book. Give it a real shot. Don't jump ship after the first 20 nos. Listen to the feedback but once you know your work is golden: Patience, patience, patience. RELAX and ENJOY LIFE, but always be ready, and keep in mind that the first time you let your attention drift, is when that giant bass is going to hit ! It's easiest to score a big fish when you are standing on solid ground.

**Subtlety.** Be as quiet as possible. Do not whine about how you are never published. Do not bump or bang around in the boat. Poor you, you have not sold your masterpiece. Stop saying that. The big fish out there can smell nervousness a mile away. Kick back and show them all that you are totally chill. If the fish jump well! Don't worry about throwing your mega lure (your masterpiece book) around some. It won't scare them away. It might bring more fish near your lure/

**Find the big fish first.** Agents are especially territorial, know their territory and only drop the appropriate bait. No sci-fi books to someone who doesn't like sci-fi. If you have had a nibble before, send something else when it is ready.

**Avoid the crowds.** No joke. Don't send out to agents who just went to the biggest fattest conference ever. Look for new, hungry agents! Don't try to elbow in on a BTA unless you have relatives or celebrity/actor.

**Fishing the mega lures.** Be ready to get something into the email at the drop of a hat. Have your query ready to go. Have your synopsis ready to go. Have a perfect pitch. An also be aware of the stories that the BTA is into.