



## *The House on the Gulf* by Margaret Peterson Haddix

**Subjects:** Housesitting; Grandparents; Mystery and detective stories

**Book List:** Florida

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When 12-year-old Britt's older brother, Bran, gets a housesitting job for the summer, it seems perfect, wonderful, awesome. Britt is so tired to living in their tiny apartment. Now, her family will get paid to live in the beautiful house on the gulf for three months. The older couple that owns the house will spend their summer in New York. Since the older couple is paying them, Britt's mom will be able to quit her two waitressing jobs and go to college full-time. She will be able to qualify for a badly needed scholarship that will allow her to accomplish her dream of becoming a doctor.

So things seem great, but Britt senses that something isn't quite right. Take Bran's behavior when they accidentally meet up with the owner of the house. They hadn't moved in yet and Britt stepped forward to introduce herself but Bran cut her off and sent her away so he could speak with Mr. Marquis in private. This reminded Britt that Bran had made all the arrangements for this job. That neither her nor her mom had spoken with the owners. That seemed odd. Another strange thing was that Bran instantly packed up and put away the Marquises' dishes, pictures and knick-knacks—anything personal or antique. He also said they shouldn't use the air-conditioning (in scorching Florida summer heat) or the washer and dryer. Bran explains that he simply wants to be sure nothing is broken or stolen. But Britt doesn't get it. And then she begins to notice more and more ominous signs that things are not right.

Bran's personality changes. He appears panicked much of the time. He even sweats, which is totally unlike her cool older brother. His normally sweet temperament is mostly missing in action, leaving an unusually mean attitude. Britt wishes he would talk to her, tell her what's going on. Britt tries to talk to her mother, but her attempts are unsuccessful, her Mom is overwhelmed with her college load. Britt is sick with worry. Obviously something is seriously wrong. Determined to get to the bottom of things, Britt starts investigating and makes a startling discovery—the Marquises aren't whom Bran has led her and their mom to believe. So whose house are they staying in, and why has Bran brought them there? Are they in trouble? Are they in danger? Solve the mystery for yourself, (*Hold up book*) read *The House on the Gulf* by Margaret Peterson Haddix.



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