The Drummer of Tedworth

One of the earliest poltergeist cases ever recorded happened in Tedworth, England, in 1661. *Poltergeist* is a German word meaning “noisy ghost,” and this ghost in Tedworth was certainly noisy. The weird experience started when John Mompesson, a respected magistrate, was bothered by a terrible noise. He discovered it was a beggar, William Drury, who had been walking the streets of the town for several days, beating his drum and demanding money. Mompesson and the townspeople were very annoyed by Drury, so the magistrate had the drummer arrested and his drum confiscated. William Drury was very angry. He put a spell on the Mompesson house and said he would not remove it until his drum was returned.

Then the trouble began! Night after night, drumbeats could be heard in the Mompesson house. An invisible drummer began following the Mompesson children. The drummer even beat out military songs on their beds.

Still drumming, the poltergeist began doing other things as well. The children had their shoes thrown about and their hair pulled. They were often tossed out of bed. Mrs. Mompesson found her Bible in the fireplace and ashes in the porridge bowls. A friend visiting the Mompessons found that all the money in his pockets had turned black. Everyone was shocked when John discovered his favorite horse lying on the ground with its hind leg jammed in its mouth.

Joseph Glanvill, the chaplain of King Charles II, came to investigate the mysterious happenings. He witnessed some incredible things at the Mompesson house, but could not discover a cause for the disturbances. The drumming continued for two years and then stopped as suddenly as they had started. No one has heard them since.

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Main Idea
1. What did the people of Tedworth think caused the strange happenings at the Mompesson house?

2. Circle the words you think describe the case of the Drummer of Tedworth.
   a. eerie
   b. pleasant
   c. serene
   d. delicate
   e. unnatural
   f. terrifying

Context Clues
3. The respected *magistrate* came to town.
   a. salesman
   b. town official
   c. doctor

4. Joseph Glanvill came to *investigate* the occurrences.
   a. look into
   b. inform
   c. duplicate

5. He witnessed many *incredible* things.
   a. immature
   b. hard to see
   c. hard to believe

6. To *confiscate* means to
   a. give back something
   b. take away something
   c. confuse.