

Some of the themes in this extract are:

- family relationships
- the impact of prolonged illness
- fear for one's mental health
- reflecting on the past.

Look at the examples from the text that illustrate these themes in the following table. Match each example with one of the themes listed above and comment on their effect.

▼ THEME	▼ EXAMPLE	▼ COMMENT
	'I must not even think of it but I did think of it.'	
	'I knew now that he had not heard me getting up and walking around on just this one night.'	
	'I don't remember, at any rate having to tackle any of the jobs that piled up for me in later summers, when I fought quite willingly to maintain the decency of our house.'	
	'so that I could spend part of the time wandering about like a visitor'	This shows that she was allowed to be freer than she would have otherwise been, because of her illness. It hints at the idleness that would have contributed to the narrator's sense of unease.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OR FICTION

The autobiographical and fictional elements of this short story are very cleverly intertwined, so it is difficult for the reader to judge where the autobiography ends and the storytelling begins. This is partly what makes the story both entertaining and effective. However, there are certain sections where the reader feels that one aspect is stronger than the other.

Two such extracts are given in the following table. Complete the table by adding more points to the 'Explanation' column. The first point has been included for you.

▼ ASPECT	▼ EXTRACT	▼ EXPLANATION
Fictional element is strong	'One night – I can't say whether it could be the twentieth or the twelfth or only the eighth or the ninth that I had got up and walked – I got a sense, too late for me to change my pace, that there was somebody around the corner. There was somebody waiting there and I could do nothing but walk right on'	Is important for plot development
Autobiographical element is strong	'I have thought that he was maybe in his better work clothes because he had a morning appointment to go to the bank, to learn, not to his surprise, that there was no extension to his loan. He had worked as hard as he could but the market was not going to turn around and he had to find a new way of supporting us and paying off what we owed at the same time. Or he may have found out that there was a name for my mother's shakiness and that it was not going to stop. Or that he was in love with an impossible woman.'	Strong sense of family history