# **Short Story: The Will**

## Level B1-B2

Papa Dorido was a strong-willed man. His will was made of iron and rarely bent. The old man created his own rules and followed them religiously as if his whole life depended on them. It was rare for him to deviate from his course and when he did, hell broke loose.

Hell broke loose in Papa Dorido's household when he decided to marry a second wife.

"I won't tolerate this," his wife of twenty-five years told him when she heard his intentions.

"I will marry her, whether you want it or not, "he'd insisted, reminding her that he was the head of the family and he could do exactly as he wished.

Mary, or Mama Dorido as she was fondly called, wished she could turn back the hands of time. Her husband had been adorable when they first met. Then, he had none of that stubbornness that sullied his character now, turning him into a stranger who was willing to inflict the burden of a second wife upon her flail shoulders.

She'd never pictured herself as a first wife. Neither did she dream of becoming a rival to a would-bemistress that would compete with her for her husband's attention.

She was yet to discover the measure of Papa Dorido's will.

AFFIRMAT	IVE FORM
WILL	WOULD
<ul> <li>Talking about future plans. (He will come tomorrow.)</li> <li>Predicting future actions. (She'll be a doctor one day.)</li> <li>Expressing certainty about the future. (That'll be the postman.)</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Expressing repetitive actions in the past. (He would faint often.</li> <li>Expressing possibility in the past (I would have married you.)</li> <li>Expressing possibility in the past in conditionals. (I'd have done it if I were you.)</li> </ul>
Deciding to do something spontaneously. (Wait, I'll come with you!)  RAPID DECISION  ORDER	Expressing possibility in the future in conditionals. (If I were rich, I would buy a big house.)      HYPOTHESIS
<ul> <li>Expressing commands. (You will respect the rules of this house.)</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Giving advice. (I'd suggest that you stop drinking.) RECOMMENDA</li> </ul>
Committing oneself to someone or something. (I will help you, don't worry.)      PROMISE OR OFFER	Expressing desires. (I wish you would treat me better.)  WISH
NEGATIV	/E FORM
<ul> <li>Talking about future plans. (He will not come tomorrow.)</li> <li>Predicting future actions. (She won't be a doctor.)</li> </ul>	Expressing impossibility in the past. (He wouldn't have done it ten years ago.)  PAST  PAST
Refusing to do something. (I won't do it.)  REFUSAL	Refusing to do something in the past. (She wouldn't answer my call.)  REFUSAL
Expressing commands. (You will not leave this room whenever	Giving advice. (I wouldn't stay with him. Leave.)
you want.) ORDER/ PROHIBITION	RECOMMENDATION
INTERROGA	TIVE FORM
<ul> <li>Asking someone if they can do something for us. (Will you pass me the salt, please?)</li> </ul> REQUEST	Asking someone if they can do something for us. (Would you pass by my office, please?)  POLITE REQUEST
<ul> <li>Asking questions in conditional sentences. (What will happen if snow falls in the desert?)</li> <li>HYPOTHESIS</li> </ul>	Asking questions in conditional sentences. (What would happen if he came?)      HYPOTHESIS
Asking for information. (When will you come?) INTERROGATION	Asking for information politely. (Where would he hide?)
Expressing commands. (Will you be quiet?)  ORDER	Making invitations. (Would you like some tea?)  OFFER

#### **A Surprise**

One morning, when Mama Dorido was sweeping her yard, a young woman arrived. She was tall, light-skinned and wore long braids that reached her waist. A friend of hers had shown her the way to their house, she explained, and she was glad that she'd been able to come all this way.

Mama Dorido listened and stared and couldn't believe how fate had thrown this young woman in her path. Her beauty was stunning, the older woman judged and appraised and felt threatened at the same time. She wondered why she didn't muster the courage to tell this girl to go back where she'd come from before the situation became worse.

"You look very tired. Let me offer you some water. You must be thirsty. Will you have some water?" she asked the stranger hastily and dashed to the kitchen without waiting for an answer. When she came back, the young lady had found a sweet spot on the veranda. It suddenly dawned upon Mama Dorido that this temporary visit could turn into a permanent one if she wasn't careful enough. She could feel her heart

pounding and she tried her best not to betray her feelings when she handed the other woman a glass of water.

"We might as well introduce each other,' the young lady started and Mama Dorido tightened her fists because she knew that this was the day when her life was going to change forever.

"You must be Steve's wife."

Steve. Steven Dorido. This young lady was calling her husband Steve.

"Yes, I am," she replied. "Who are you?" she asked in return and the stranger laughed so loudly, Mama Dorido felt ashamed because she knew that there was no joke in her question.

"We should get to know each other because we are going to be co-wives,' the cheeky girl, who could be no more than twenty, spat the truth in her face and Mama Dorido didn't know how to react. Her motherly instinct wanted her to be protective of this child who didn't know anything about life. Yet, her wifely side told her that she had to act fiercely and mercilessly towards this rival who was about to endanger her marriage.

As soon as she recovered her spirits she said:

"I can't let you destroy my marriage. Mr Dorido and I have been married for more than twenty years.

This is actually our 25<sup>th</sup>-year anniversary. Why do you want to bring sorrow into this blessed union? What's your name, by the way? Who are your parents? Who is your mother? Do I know her?"

"My name is Joyce and my surname doesn't actually matter to you, does it? You shouldn't be worried like that. Why must you worry about people whom you don't even know?"

Mama Dorido didn't even know how to answer all those questions. Her own mind was laden with unanswered questions and she wanted Mr Dorido, the coward, to be there so that he could explain why a stranger had had the audacity to storm her house and leave havoc in her wake.

"I can't answer those questions for you, you know. Steve should be here. If I were you, I'd stop worrying though. I mean no harm and I come with really good intentions. Why don't we have a cup of tea so that we can talk about our future arrangements?"

AFFIRMATIVE FORM					
MODAL	MAY	MIGHT			
POSSIBLE	<ul> <li>Possibility in the present. (He may be sick.)</li> <li>Possibility in the future. (She may come.)</li> <li>Possibility in the past. (He may have repaired the car.)</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Possibility in the present. (He might be sick.)</li> <li>Possibility in the future. (I might come tomorrow.)</li> <li>Possibility in the future in conditionals. (If they were rich, they might buy a big house.)</li> <li>Possibility in the past. (He might have repaired my car.)</li> </ul>			
ALLOWED TO	Permission in the present. (You may stand up.)	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,			
MAKING SUGGESTIONS	Putting forward an idea for consideration. (You may want to use this way. It's safer.)	Putting forward an idea to someone. (You might as well eat the whole pizza.)			
GOOD WISHES	Wishing someone well. (May you live a long life.)				
	NEGATIV	/E FORM			
IMPOSSIBLE	Impossibility in the present.(He may not be sick.) Impossibility in the past. (He may not have repaired my car.) Impossibility in the future. (He may not come.)	<ul> <li>Impossibility in the present. (He might not be sick.)</li> <li>Impossibility in the past in conditionals. (He could have done it, if I had come earlier.)</li> <li>Impossibility in the future. (He might not go.)</li> </ul>			
NOT ALLOWED TO	Prohibition in the present. (You may not go out.)				
	INTERROGA	TIVE FORM			
IS IT POSSIBLE TO	Asking for permission politely. (May I go out?)	<ul> <li>Asking for permission in a polite way. (Might I borrow your book?)</li> </ul>			
QUESTIONS	Asking questions in conditional sentences. (What may happen if snow falls in the desert?)     Asking for information. (How may I help you?)	<ul> <li>Asking questions about possibility. (What could be the reason?)</li> <li>Asking questions in conditional sentences. (What might happen if he comes today?)</li> </ul>			
REQUESTS	Asking something from someone in a polite way.  (May I use your telephone?)	<ul> <li>Asking something from someone in a formal way. (Might I take your temperature?)</li> </ul>			

#### **Enough!**

"Go away and don't come back," Mama Dorido said calmly but her blood was boiling and she wanted to inflict harm upon this person who was hurting her for no reason at all. Yet, her guardian angel told her that she'd better preserve her emotions. May she not see the light of day tomorrow, she cursed but immediately removed the curse because her pastor had told her that it was bad to wish ill on other people, especially our enemies. "We must love one another," he'd said. That was yet to happen.

"I will come back," Joyce said joyfully. She stood up and headed for the gate. Mama Dorido watched as the girl's braids swayed playfully and relentlessly behind her back. "Papa Dorido will pay for this," the older woman told herself as she stood up and started searching for her broom.

That evening, Papa Dorido arrived earlier than usual. He was carrying two heavy suitcases and he placed them in one of the spare rooms. Mama Dorido was in utter shock. She didn't want to jump into conclusions but she was staring at the truth.

"Those must be the young woman's suitcases," she said and got no answer. Instead, Papa Dorido smiled and his wife felt as if the world was conspiring against her.

"I won't let you destroy our marriage. I can't let you do that."

Papa Dorido did not reply. He asked for his food instead. Mama Dorido went to fetch some *nsima* and meat stew with vegetables and placed everything in front of her husband.

"Everything will be all right. You just have to accept the situation. Relationships evolve and this will be for the better. You'd better get used to the idea."

Mama Dorido thought of her four children and how they would think of this new arrangement. Her two boys Khama and Chiku would definitely frown upon their father's choice but they wouldn't condemn him. Her two daughters, young as they were, would understand her plight and might feel sorry for her but they couldn't do anything for their mother. It was up to her to make Papa Dorido change his mind.

Unfortunately, time was against her. Joyce was in such a hurry to fill her shoes that she arrived the following day. She still had her long braids and her wide smile and she sailed into the house with no care in the world because she knew that the master of the house was on her side and nothing could happen to her.

AFFIRMAT	TIVE FORM
SHALL	SHOULD
Referring to future actions. (I shall come.)     Predicting future actions . (They shall perish.)  FUTURE	Giving strong recommendations. (You should eat less.)  ADVICE
<ul> <li>Declaring what you are set out to do. (I shall do it no matter the cost.) INTENTIONS</li> </ul>	Expressing obligation and necessity. (Children should was dishes every day.)  OUGHT TO
Expressing commands. (You shall eat at 1 p.m.)  ORDERS	Possibility in the future in conditionals. (If you should pass these exams, I will be very happy.)      HYPOTHESIS
<ul> <li>Committing oneself to someone or something. (I shall marry you.)</li> </ul> SOLEMN PROMISE	Probability in the future in conditionals. (If they were rich, the should probably buy a house.)
NEGATIV	VE FORM
<ul> <li>Referring to future actions that will not happen. (I shall not come.)</li> </ul>	Giving strong recommendations. (You shouldn't eat junk food.  ADVICE
<ul> <li>Predicting future actions that will not happen. (They shall not perish.)</li> </ul>	Expressing criticism. (You shouldn't have done it.)  REGRET
• Expressing prohibition. (Students shall not arrive late at school.)  INTERDICTI	<ul> <li>Expressing prohibition. (Visitors should not leave their bicycles here.)</li> </ul>
INTERROGA	ATIVE FORM
Asking someone if you can do something for them. (Shall I escort you?)  FORMAL OFFER	Asking questions about obligation. (Should I close the door behind me?) DOIHAVE TO?
Asking for advice. (How shall we proceed?) INSTRUCTION	Asking for advice. (What should I do?)      RECOMMENDATION
<ul> <li>Presenting an idea to someone so that they can consider it.         (Shall I serve dinner now?) SUGGESTIONS</li> </ul>	Making subtle suggestions. (Jane, shouldn't you be going to bed now?)  DISAPPROVAL
Asking for information. (When shall the ceremony take place?)  INTERROGATION	Asking questions in conditional sentences. (What should happen if he shows up?)  HYPOTHESIS

#### **Time to Move on**

There was no wedding and no official ceremony, yet Joyce settled into her new role with ease. She had a separate wing in the house and managed her own life with her new husband but things were never the same for Mama Dorido. She resented her husband and the choice he'd made with all her mind and heart.

"You should leave him. You can't stay in this situation," her best friend advised her. "It's better to live with less money than suffer under the hands of such an inconsiderate man."

Mama Dorido would not think of ending it all. She believed in marriage and staying with the person you loved no matter the hardships that one went through. Would it be wise to leave everything behind her just because a twenty-year old girl had captured the eternal interest of her husband? Hadn't she worked hard all her life to reach where they were? Would it be wise to leave everything she had fought for for this brainless girl who knew nothing about the world?

Yet, the brainless girl had ensnared her husband and she had taken over her life, destroying her dreams and her once-perfect life.

Life continued under the bright sun and the thin moon and soon, Joyce was expecting Papa Dorido's first child. Mama Dorido lost hope about getting her former life back. She understood that this wasn't a mere whim and that her husband was to share. She accepted the situation and the new wife. Life must go on, she told herself.

Therefore, Mama Dorido vowed to help her rival whenever she could. She told herself that she could turn this situation into a positive and productive one and that nothing but good would come out of all this. Thus she helped her whenever she could and in fact, she found out that that wasn't difficult at all. It was actually Mama Dorido who accompanied Joyce to the hospital to give birth. Afterwards, the women's friendship was sealed and no one, even Papa Dorido, could come between them to ruin their friendship.

One day, the two women were sitting on the veranda, chatting peacefully and tending to some chores at the same time. Papa Dorido arrived early from work and found his wives sitting together. He took a chair from the house and placed it a bit far from them but within hearing distance.

"My dear wives, I have a special favour to ask from you. May I tell you something that will change how things work in this house? However, don't worry. It's for the common good."

Mama Dorido studied his face and knew that nothing good would come out of that mouth. He was yet to drop another bomb.

"I would like to marry a third wife."

Joyce started wailing and Mama Dorido reached out to her and started patting her back, reassuring her that her life didn't depend on Papa Dorido's and that she'd be better off on her own.

"What is that you want Papa Dorido? Aren't two wives enough for you?" Mama Dorido finally asked her husband who didn't give a single care in the world. He rather looked at her pensively, already thinking about life with his future wife.

"It is not a crime to have three wives."

	AFFIRM	IATIVE FORM
MODAL	CAN	COULD
POSSIBLE	Possibility in the present. (He can come today.)	<ul> <li>Possibility in the past. (He could have come that day.)</li> <li>Possibility in the future. (I could come tomorrow.)</li> <li>Possibility in the future in conditionals. (If they were rich, they could buy a big house.)</li> </ul>
ABLE TO	Ability in the present. (She can swim.)	Ability in the past. (He could swim across the river.)
ALLOWED TO	Permission in the present. (You can stay here.)	Permission in the past. (They could stay with us.)
	NEGA	TIVE FORM
IMPOSSIBLE	Impossibility in the present (He can't come.)	<ul> <li>Impossibility in the past. (He couldn't have come.)</li> <li>Impossibility in the past in conditionals. (He couldn't have done it if I had come after seven.)</li> </ul>
NOT ALLOWED TO	Prohibition in the present. (You cannot go out.)	Prohibition in the past. (She couldn't go out. She was grounded.)
UNABLE TO	Inability in the present. (I can't ski.)	Inability in the past. (I couldn't speak for days.)
	INTERRO	GATIVE FORM
IS IT POSSIBLE TO	Asking for permission. (Can I go out?)	Asking for permission in a polite way. (Could I go out?)
QUESTIONS	Asking questions in conditional sentences.     (What can I do if I feel sick on the plane?)     Asking for information. (When can I come?)	<ul> <li>Asking questions about possibility. (What could be the reason?)</li> <li>Asking questions in conditional sentences. (How could I help you if you were sick?)</li> </ul>
REQUESTS	Asking something from someone. (Can you help me with my homework?)	<ul> <li>Asking something from someone in a polite way. (Could I call you today?)</li> </ul>
OFFERS	Asking someone if you can do something for them. (Can I drive you to the airport?)	Asking someone if you can do something for them in a polite manner. (Could I help you with the dishes?)

### **A Battle of Wills**

He spat on the ground and cast a disdainful glance at Joyce who was still crying.

"Stop whining, will you?" He didn't get the response he wanted so he stood up unceremoniously and stormed out of the compound.

"I will marry a third wife and there is nothing you can do about it."

The two women watched helplessly as Papa Dorido disappeared once again only to return the following day with two heavy suitcases, a girl who could be barely eighteen and a one-year old child.

"Meet my son."

Mama Dorido said nothing and the eighteen-year-old said nothing and the child said nothing.

"Shall you say something?" he asked and finding no answer he summoned the new wife into her new house and helped her find new quarters.

Later that evening, the two first wives summoned some courage and went into the house to discover what had transpired in their absence.

"From now on," Papa Dorido declared. "Mimi will be sleeping in what used to be Joyce's quarters.

Joyce, ask Mama Dorido to find you a new place to sleep."

Joyce awoke from her slumber and started yelling at Papa Dorido.

"Should I throw you out?" Papa Dorido asked and warned her at the same time. "Do you want to find yourself begging in the streets?"

Joyce shut up and yet remembered how Papa Dorido had been so sweet and considerate when they'd just met. He would visit her house where she used to live with her parents every single day. Now, he was discarding her like a piece of rubbish and she did not understand.

"I shall never trust any other man again," she told herself bitterly and cast sorrowful looks at her new born who was nestled in her right arm. Joyce pictured her future. "She will be a doctor," she told herself. "My daughter will be a doctor and she shall not follow her mother's footsteps. I can make this work. I will make this work."

The two women did not feel jealous when it came to Mimi. They felt sorry for her because they knew what her fate would be in a matter of weeks or months.

Papa Dorido was a contented man. He had three wives and six children and nothing could ruin his happiness, even the sour looks that he often caught on Joyce's face.

Mimi was happy in her own way too. She had a roof above her head and her son had a father and new-found half-brothers and half-sisters. Life was finally good for her even though she was 'supposedly' married to a man who was old enough to be her father.

	AFFIRMATI	VE FORM
MODAL	MUST	EXAMPLES
OBLIGATIONS	Saying if we are obliged to do something.	I must respect the elderly.
NECESSITY	Saying if something is necessary.	I must eat more vegetables.
DEDUCTIONS	Making guesses about the present.	He must be at home. His car is outside.
	Making guesses about the past.	He must have been at home. His car was outside.
ORDERS	Making commands.	You must come back immediately.
SUGGESTIONS	Making positive suggestions.	This film is really nice. You must see it!
	NEGATIVE	FORM
OBLIGATIONS	Saying what we cannot do out of duty.	I must not talk rudely to the elderly.
PROHIBITION	Forbidding someone to do something.	You mustn't talk to me like that.
DEDUCTIONS	Making guesses about the present.	He must not be at home. His car is not outside.
	<ul> <li>Making guesses about the past.</li> </ul>	• He mustn't have been at home. His car wasn't outside.
SUGGESTIONS	Making negative recommendations.	You mustn't work so hard. It's bad for your health.
	INTERROGAT	TIVE FORM
DO WE HAVE TO?	Asking questions about obligation.	Must I go to bed so early?
IS IT NECESSARY TO?	Asking questions about necessity.	Must we take vitamins all the time?
INTERROGATION	Asking for information.	What must we do exactly?
CRITICISMS	Expressing disapproval.	Must you talk so loudly?

#### **Life Goes on**

She had another son with Papa Dorido and another one. Life couldn't be any better. Her children were a joy to see. They were beautiful and intelligent and they could do so many things. They made Papa Dorido happy.

Yet, Papa Dorido would need one more wife and two more children to be finally contented with life.

Yet, life had other plans for him.

Life finally caught up with him and his day of reckoning came. He feared he was about to make his final curtain call. His wives were surprised to see him arrive early from work, shivering and crying because he was not feeling well, not at all.

"Can you make me some tea please?"

Joyce rushed to prepare him a cup of his favourite Chombe and Mimi rushed to his side, making him as comfortable as he could be.

Jackie, Papa Dorido's latest wife started wailing because she was young and she could not handle the emotional toil.

Papa Dorido told his wives to gather around him because he had an important message for them.

"I'm not getting a new wife," he joked when he saw the worried looks on their faces.

"I'm afraid I might not last long in this world. I have lived a long life and you have all made me happy in your own way. I now have to depart this world and I want to leave it peacefully and with a clean conscience."

Jackie wailed even louder and she could not be consoled. Mama Dorido told her to keep quiet because Papa Dorido had something important to say. When Jackie's crying subsided, Papa Dorido continued.

"First of all, my dear wives. Thank you for your patience all these years and thank you for your support.

I don't know what would have happened if you had decided to leave me. May you live long lives so that you can take care of our children."

"You will remain with us Papa Dorido. You won't go anywhere else," Mimi said as she held his hand and wished that her husband would remain with them forever.

"It is a tough world out there and I don't want you to suffer when I'm gone. I've carefully thought about each one of you," he coughed and painfully pulled out a piece of paper from his pocket. "Can you read this Mama Dorido?"

Mama Dorido was surprised but she took the piece of paper anyway. She started reading its contents.

"At the event of my death, I would like my property to be equally shared among all my children and their mothers because they have been such a source of joy and contentment to me."

His wives stared at him and said nothing. It was Mama Dorido who broke the silence.

"Thank you Papa Dorido for taking such a wise decision. I never thought you would come to your senses one day, but here you are."

Papa Dorido coughed and waited for Mimi to speak.

"Life has not been easy but we have learned to live with each other. Your decision will make us live peacefully together when you are no longer with us."

In fact, Papa Dorido did not die that day nor the next. He lived long after this salient moment, long enough to take in a fifth wife who bore him three more children as Mama Dorido and her co-wives watched helplessly from afar. That's a story for another day though. Would you love to hear it?

