Directions:

 1 – Highlight areas which confuse you and about which you want clarification.

 2 – Demonstrate evidence of a close reading, by providing ***reactions, questions, and mini-summaries***

**Rubin: Even if you’re not Prince, show some will power**

[Neal Rubin](http://www.detroitnews.com/staff/27081/neal-rubin/), The Detroit News 8:55 a.m. EDT May 3, 2016



(Photo: Jordan Strauss/Invision/AP)

Prince was an eclectic figure with lots of things on his mind.

Dying apparently wasn’t one of them. Neither was the thought of his face on boxes of spaghetti, or “Let’s Go Crazy” coming from a musical toilet paper dispenser.

A Minnesota judge asked a packed courtroom Monday if anybody in attendance had perhaps arrived bearing Prince’s will, or at least knew of one.

No one raised a hand, so the judge appointed a firm called Bremer Trust to handle Prince’s estate. Unless a suitable document shows up unexpectedly, it appears that the groundbreaking Prince Rogers Nelson has become just another famous person who cashed out without leaving instructions.

“I have a feeling that if you’d asked him what his goals were,” says Troy-based estate planning attorney Danielle Mayoras, “No. 1 would have been privacy, and No. 2 would have been control.”

By not having planned for his inevitable departure, he loses both. Oops.

Mayoras and her husband, Andrew, met on the first day of law school at the University of Michigan 22 years ago.

Astutely mixing common sense with tales of famous people who lacked it, they have since become celebrated in their own right, offering their expertise everywhere from ABC to CNN to a periodic [Reelz](http://www.reelz.com/) network program called “Celebrity Legacies.”

They have a website, [trialandheirs.com](http://trialandheirs.com/); a book by the same name, and a long list of knuckleheaded celebrities who either didn’t make arrangements or didn’t make them correctly.

Jimi Hendrix, Howard Hughes, Pablo Picasso, Sonny Bono and Amy Winehouse died intestate. Ex-quarterback Steve McNair’s mother lost the house he bought for her. Ray Charles astutely called a meeting of his 12 children and their nine mothers, but never mentioned who should control his image.

In those cases, millions of dollars were at stake. For most of the rest of us, the stakes aren’t that high, but even if your stakes are only worth a few steaks, you should figure out where they’re going.

Otherwise, your home state will create a will for you, and it has no idea how much you loved your ferret.

“They may give your fortune to someone you don’t have a relationship with,” Mayoras says — “or don’t even like.”

**Songs for sale**

Prince had no living parents, no current wife, and five half-siblings who have the same claim on his estate as his one full sister.

He also had $27 million worth of land and buildings, heaven knows how much else in cash, investments, pizza coupons and frequent flier miles, a cavernous vault of unreleased songs, and a good running start on an ultimate net worth of $500 million.

“What if alleged children come forward?” Mayoras asks.

That’s what happened in Bono’s case, and the other potential heirs apparently arranged a buyout. With Prince, who died not quite two weeks ago at 57, “theoretically the child could inherit everything.”

Famously private, Prince could have established a revocable living trust and kept his affairs concealed behind a nice purple curtain. Instead, his estate will be publicly paraded though probate court.

“A lot of us don’t want to think about death and mortality,” Mayoras says. Surveys have shown that more than 60 percent of 45- to 54-year-olds don’t have wills.

Maybe that was Prince’s issue: The subject just made him queasy. But what he should have considered is his image being licensed to any cheesy company willing to hand his executor a check.

Best case, that’s not what will happen. Best cases, however, are not guaranteed.

**Get it in writing**

Another renowned musical innovator, Frank Zappa, died in 1993 and left behind four oddly named children.

One of them, [Dweezil](http://www.dweezilzappaworld.com/), has toured for years with an act called Zappa Plays Zappa — but now the family trust is threatening to zap Zappa for $150,000 in copyright infringement penalties every time he plays one of his dad’s songs without permission.

The lesson there is that you can’t anticipate every grudge, rivalry or snit. But that’s an advanced course.

The basic lesson is that if you care about your relatives, your friends, your reputation or your collection of antique Faygo bottles, you should consider a world without you in it:

Whether you’re a pauper or a Prince.

Directions for reflections:

Write three one-paragraph reflections, each one placing the issue in a different context. Label each paragraph according to its context. Choose from the list of contexts below:

Cultural Health & Safety Social

Academic Generational Economic

Historical Religious Environmental

Political Moral Medical

Gender Legal Self-expression