



### Text Version of Audio Story: Prince

“The guys” — as old Prince called them (nobody can remember how he got the nickname Prince) — said they’d be around to pick him up at about 6 a.m. to go fishing.

Prince’s regular fishing buddy had died a little while back, and these guys coming to pick him up were that fellow’s sons and a few others. Old Prince was about 75 years old. He had retired from years of hard work as a low-paid janitor and lived all by himself in a tiny house of about 300 sq. ft. It had a bedroom, a kitchen, a living room, and a big-screen TV hooked up to a satellite dish — 500 channels. That TV was old Prince’s only luxury. The tiny house was well-maintained. Everything was painted up just the way it should be. For the most part, Prince lived off the land. His diet could probably best be described as gamey.

Prince had a garden behind his house, and he loved growing vegetables. His deep freeze was filled with venison, wild turkey, and squirrel, and pheasant. Prince had little, if any, grocery bills. Wherever wild berries grew, Prince was there picking them, whatever the land could provide. These guys who were about to pick him up would give old Prince all the fish caught in the day.

Old Prince loved fish more than anything else. He’d fillet them and keep them in his freezer. Old Prince lived such a simple life that his bills all combined couldn’t have added up to more than \$150 a month. His satellite TV might have cost 40 or 50 bucks a month. That would have been his biggest bill. A little bit for electric. His clothes came from yard sales, 25 cents here, 50 cents there for a shirt, maybe a dollar for a pair of jeans. A pretty simple life, and old Prince liked it that way.

Although he had little education, he somewhere along the way learned to read and write. Every evening he could hardly wait for the local paperboy to drop off his evening edition of the Sentinel. There he could read about the local bar fights and who got arrested for what, who got themselves a DUI. He could read about domestic disputes there in our little town and find out if it was the husband or the wife, or perhaps both, who landed in jail overnight. He could read about all his friends in the obituaries, who were crossing over to the spirit world.

The guys finally showed up that morning to pick old Prince up.

They told him, *“Bring a little money, Prince. We’ll stop for some lunch somewhere.”*

And with that, Prince opened his cupboard and got a big, gallon pickle jar down. He dug through all the wadded up cash in it, looking for a 5. He'd have to check another jar. There was nothing smaller than a 20 on this one. The guys couldn't believe what they were seeing. Prince was such a simple guy that he didn't understand the concept of putting his money in the bank. He thought the bank was just for cashing checks, and that that's where you went to pay your electric bill. For years, Prince have been cashing his checks and later his retirement checks and wadding the cash up and stuffing it tight in a gallon pickle jar.

When they all got back from fishing that day, the guys explained to Prince the concept of a Certificate of Deposit and Interest. They sat around Prince's kitchen table and emptied all the pickle jars and counted up his cash — \$125,000, give or take a thousand. They took him to the bank and helped him to get a CD. Prince was amazed that these nice bank people would protect his money and even send him a check once a month in the mail. He'd take that interest check into the bank, month after month and cash it. He'd take the cash home, wad it up tight and stick it in a pickle jar.

The last I heard of old Prince, he was in an old folks' home. I hope he's doing well.

From somewhere behind the radio with the music of Johnny X, I'm the American Storyteller.