

CHECKING OUT

by Ken Bradbury



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Characters: Maude, Freida

MAUDE: (*as Freida enters*) May I help you?

FREIDA: I'd like to check out.

MAUDE: Alright. Enjoy your stay?

FREIDA: Yes, but I'm looking forward to going home.

MAUDE: Do you have any extra charges on your bill?

FREIDA: No. My bill's been paid in full ...

MAUDE: (*reading Freida's bill*) By another party, it seems.

FREIDA: Yes. It should say "Paid in full."

MAUDE: It does. Hmm. That was quite a gift.

FREIDA: Yes ... and I did nothing to deserve it ... but now I'd like to check out.

MAUDE: Look, I don't mean to nose into your business but just why do you want to check out?

FREIDA: Look at me. I can't stay here forever.

MAUDE: Well, no ... but there's no need to rush off.

FREIDA: Honey, look, I'm basically spare parts ... an artificial hip, a plastic knee, the teeth come out at night, and I rent my hair.

MAUDE: That's why you're checking out?

FREIDA: I'm checking out before I fall apart. Look, I'm in sort of a hurry.

MAUDE: Sorry. I was just asking ... you were at the top of the stairs?

FREIDA: When I checked in. Just young folks up there now. They've moved me down to the ground floor ... no stairs.

MAUDE: I know it's none of my business, but why don't you stay a while longer? We've got plenty of room and Lord knows there's lots to do here.

FREIDA: Yes, but there are plenty of younger people to do it. Who needs an old coot around? Oh, I used to be a real player around here ... committees, small groups, bazaars, teaching. But when you get older ... I don't know. Who listens to you? And I'll tell you the truth, it's not as much fun when your friends start leaving and you're still here. That's why I'm checking out. I've done my work. It's right there on my bill, isn't it?



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