

**FOR THE FOURTH
TIME OF ASKING**

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For the Fourth Time of Asking by Evelyn Whitaker

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EVELYN WHITAKER

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FOR THE



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FOR THE FOURTH TIME
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THEY were the last people in the world, you would have imagined, to have the slightest romance connected with them in any way, least of all romance with a deep tragic tone about it.

Mr. Price was a spare, wiry little man of sixty, with a consequential air about him as became a man who had been clerk and sexton at the parish church for over thirty years. He wore a

black gown on Sunday, and showed people into their seats, and was mainly answerable for the responses, especially during the winter season, when there were no visitors in Helston, and the congregations were small and sleepy. He had a strong, carrying, nasal voice, which overpowered the weak, little cat voices of the choristers, who were a new introduction of the present Vicar, and by no means approved of by Mr. Price.

The present Vicar, being young and timid, could never quite make up his mind whether the clerk should be regarded as a thorn in

the flesh or a comfort and support. There was a sort of dogged, silent opposition to any innovations, which was quenching to an ardent spirit; but, on the contrary, there was a solid loyalty that was consoling in the midst of the many forms of dissent which prevailed at Helston, and with which some of his congregation were inclined to tamper. But there was occasionally a strong feeling of irritation aroused in the Vicar's mind by the perfect self-satisfaction expressed in every line and feature of Price's face: the pale gray eye, and the neat, grizzled, mutton-