

A Pound of Flesh

What if Portia never came to Venice?

The Merchant of Venice reimagined

*"The oft-told tale begins with money ventured 'gainst a bond of flesh.
But hold! See now a new path taken, tragedy appears
and with sad death marks consequence of greed."*

In Shakespeare's classic play Antonio is saved from death when Portia persuades the court that Shylock may have the merchant's pound of flesh but only if no blood is spilt. As Antonio, his close friend Bassanio and Portia rejoice, the moneylender is humiliated and made bankrupt.

But what if Portia never reached Venice? Martin Foreman's *A Pound of Flesh* offers a different ending and new perspectives on the well-known drama. Antonio is troubled by his deep longing for Bassanio ("*The pow'rful love I bear him o'erwhelms and harsh confounds me.*"); Bassanio comes to terms with his own greed ("*Had you but known my crooked heart before it saw your face, my face had ne'er seen yours.*"); Shylock - a woman in this version - retains her righteous anger ("*Christians' scorn is but to spite the glass that shows their face.*"), while Portia is frustrated by fate ("*With heavy heart, unhappy pen and solemn ink I write from Padua.*"). Tragedy is inevitable, but what form it takes is uncertain until the end.

*"Without thy breath, without thy love, this world
must be a haunted room wherein thy ghost
no longer grants this mortal audience."*

In this fifty minute play that strips the action from all but these four characters, plus the Doge of Venice, five talented actors bring *A Pound of Flesh* to life: Gabriel Bird as Antonio, Millie Deere as Portia, Danielle Farrow as Shylock, Ollie Hiemann as Bassanio and Michael Robert-Brown as the Doge of Venice and other parts, Sound is by Dug Campbell, lighting by Freya Game.

A Pound of Flesh combines Shakespeare's words and new writing that echoes the Bard's rhythm and imagery. In addition to creating the play, Martin Foreman directs, in one of the Fringe's most popular venues in the heart of the Scottish capital. Foreman's previous plays include comedy, dystopia and versions of Ben Jonson's *Volpone* and the picaresque *Satyricon*. He most recently directed J B Priestley's *Dangerous Corner* in October 2024.

Venue theSpace on the Mile (Venue 39)

Dates	1, 2 August (reduced price previews)	20.20 (50 mins)	£8 (£6)
	3 - 9, 11 - 16, 18 - 23 August	20.20 (50 mins)	£12 (£10)

Full details of cast and crew, publicity images and background material can be found on the website.

more info: 0798 965 5482

info@arberytheatre.uk

Facebook / Instagram / Threads / TikTok / X: @arberytheatre



arberytheatre.uk/a-pound-of-flesh

for links to cast biographies, images and other information

Information about Arbery Theatre's other Fringe production, **Transfers**, will be available late April/early May