

JRB ART AT THE ELMS

Paseo Arts District

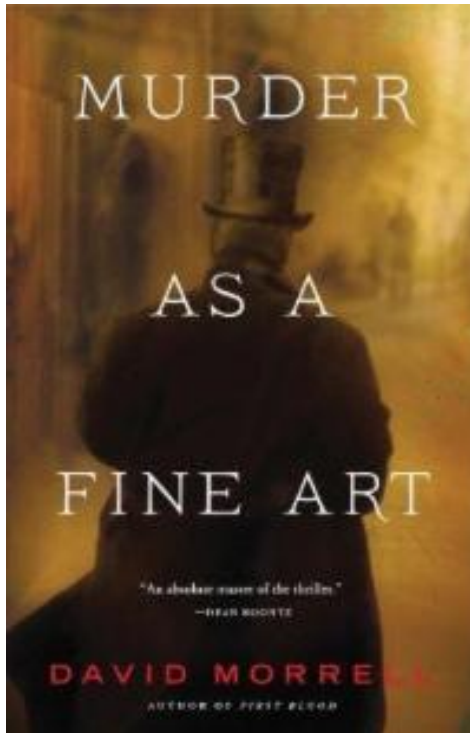
SOMETIMES IT'S THE SMALL THINGS THAT MATTER

By Joy Reed Belt

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Coat and Scarf by Stella Thomas, NFS



"Murder as a Fine Art" by David Morrell

The most important fact I can remember learning in a sociology class decades ago was that the act of becoming "change skilled" is critical to survival. The study of history and evolution certainly reinforces that thought. Horrible things have happened to civilizations since the beginning of time. But people got through them usually with the support, help, and love of other people. During the last twelve months we have been called upon to rise to yet another survival challenge. This time it's somewhat different because to be safe we must do it without the physical comfort of others and without participating in our usual supportive activities. Also, because we live in the age of technology we are bombarded with polarizing statistics,

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images, and commentaries 24/7. There doesn't seem to be a respite from bad news. The stress is cumulative.

During these past few months, I have realized that one of my most successful survival tactics has been to become much more attentive and appreciative of small pleasures and little acts of kindness. For instance, a thoughtful friend dropping off a dinner plate of food has taken the place of sharing a meal at a restaurant; having the opportunity to work with an experienced designer, who has a good eye, while selecting artwork for a corporate installation; having some valuables returned to me that I had thought were forever lost, and finding pleasure in wearing dresses by Stella Thomas to the Gallery instead of my usual pant outfits.



David Crismon, "17th Century Portrait Edited," Oil on Metal, 50 x 40 in., \$6,500

"Flower Inset" by David Crismon, NFS, Hanging in JRB's Living Room Between JoyJoy Portraits

For years I have noted that at certain times an unread book will call out to me from my home or office library and demand to be read. Two weeks ago, I spotted a book on the night table in my guest bedroom that I had not yet

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read. The book, "Murder as a Fine Art" by David Morrell, gave me many hours of pleasure. Set in 1854, It is a beautifully written and plotted mystery with wonderful characters. Because the author employed an unusual literary device, I was totally transported to Victorian London and so grateful for the perspective and the journey. I've read a couple of other books since then, but nothing as memorable. Tonight, wanting to duplicate that experience I started looking at shelves and various stacks of books in my house waiting for something to again call out to me.

I also spent time enjoying my most recent art acquisition, two quality photographs of my wonderful little dog, JoyJoy. Least you think I named her after myself, she was named Joy when I adopted her in 2017. I added the second "Joy" because when I walked her in my neighborhood people accused me of talking to myself. Anyway, the artist who created the portraits of JoyJoy specializes in photo collage. He dressed her in Elizabethan costumes, so she looks very regal. I enjoy these photographs so much that I put them in elaborate frames and have them hanging on my living room wall. Are they incongruous in that setting? Yes! Was it a sentimental thing to do? Absolutely! But looking at them definitely improves my attitude.



Digitally Manipulated Portraits of JoyJoy by Brad Stevens, NFS

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Yesterday, I was pleased to spend some quality time catching up with an old friend. Although we both wore masks and were careful to social distance, it felt good. Another friend, currently living in New York, sent me a hilarious video which helped put things into perspective. I also received a surprise gift from a friend in Indianapolis and got a text from another friend who lives in Paris. Last week I was thrilled that my wonderful staff was able to put out the Gallery's first digital calendar. We are all a bit frightened right now and feel like we have hit the proverbial pandemic wall. But think about it. As individuals we know we can't control the big things, but we can all work toward change while appreciating and enjoying the little things. After all, it may be the key to our survival.