The Hanging of Thomas Delaney

Capital punishment (death penalty) has not been used for several years in Canada and I am thankful for it. 41 years to be exact since it has been used. Canada has consistent records of our hangings after the year 1867, and they continued to 1976. Within that time, the only death sentence offered was a hanging, and other methods were not used. 1481 people in Canada have been sentenced to the death penalty according to records, and only 710 people have been hung, 14 of which were women. One of the very first recorded hangings in Canada was for Peter Cartcel, who was guilty for the murder of one man, and the harming of two others. He was sentenced to death and was hung in 1749. The very last hanging in Canada was the sentence of both Arthur Lucas, and Ronald Turpin, December 11th 1962 at Toronto’s Don Jail. Jail was the only place we held hangings. Public hangings weren’t allowed in Canada. Capital punishment was also only allowed to be sentenced for the three following crimes: rape, murder, and treason. While they are still consistent crimes today, we use different punishments such as life sentences in jail for those crimes. All though hangings were not crazy popular in Canada, one hanging that could have happened there was the one in the short story *Two Fishermen*/ *Morley Callaghan*.

I believe that the story two fishermen would have defiantly happened in Canada. My first instinct made me think that the story could have taken place somewhere in the states, possibly somewhere in the southwest, but when you look at all the evidence provided, it could most definitely could have happened in Canada. First of all, the characters in the book spoke in a way that would indicate the story took place in an older time. My first impression was somewhere around the early 1900s, when capital punishment in Canada was at its strongest point. Thomas Delaney was hung for murder, which happens to be 1 of the three reasons you can be hung. Not to mention that he was a man, who was much more likely to be hung according to our history. Another reason that it could have been in Canada is because the form of capital punishment chosen was hanging. Hanging was the only form of capital punishment used in Canada. It doesn’t necessarily mean that it was in Canada, but if it did take place there, it would make complete sense. Besides, who wouldn’t love to go fishing in our beautiful Canadian waters? Thomas Delaney certainly won’t get the chance to go fishing anymore, because he was killed at the beginning of our story.

Thomas Delany was sentenced to death for murder. “He had kills old Mathew Rheihart whom he had caught molesting his wife…” (pg 1). I 100% support the fact the he should not have been hung. Citizens in his neighborhood were outraged that “Thomas Delaney, who had grown up on the town, was being hanged…” (pg 1). This may indicate that he was a genuinely good person. When you live in a small town like that, people talk, and everyone knows everyone. Even if he is the nicest person in the world, it doesn’t mean that he is allowed to kill people. I also doesn’t mean that he went in with the intention of killing anyone. Thomas found them when his wife “had been berry picking in the hills behind the town” (pg. 1) which means that he didn’t have time to prepare for what he saw. Right in front of him, he saw his life partner, his lover, his wife, a person he means so much to him being completely violated. I imagine what he was feeling inside when he saw that. How would I react if I saw that? His first reaction must have been to rip Matthew off his wife! It would be my instinct to beat some sense into him! With all the emotions coursing through my blood and my thoughts jumbled In my brain, how would I even have the power to stop myself from killing a man. All that I would be able to see is that image replying over and over in my mind. Physical aggression is proven to act as a pain killer sending stress relief to your brain. With what I just experienced, wouldn’t I kill him too? I don’t think Thomas had the intention to murder anyone. Matthew was crazy enough to rape a woman, he couldn’t have been crazy enough to attack Thomas Delaney. For all we know it could have been self-defense because “Thomas Delaney had taken a bad beating before he had killed Rhinehart.” (pg 1) Clearly the people agreed that he shouldn’t have been killed. If Matthew survived his beating, he probably would have been hung for rape anyway. If his life was to be taken away, it’s almost as if it was Thomas’s kill and he had the right to do that. An eye for an eye. Thomas can’t take back the fact that he killed someone and it should have dealt properly in court, however I don’t think that he should have been sentenced to death due to the circumstances. I believe his sentence was too severe and should have been dealt with differently.