

**Prompt: What is the main message of the novel. Please provide examples from the text to support your analysis and findings.**

What does it take to survive in the wilderness where you know nothing about survival? After escaping his farm, Oleo is determined to have an adventure like the ones in his ancestors' stories. But what if the stories were made up to hide the true danger that awaits hidden in the wild? What if it's nothing like the stories said? In *Scary Stories For Young Foxes: The City*, the fox kit has to hide his true identity in order to survive with a group of foxes in the city. As time passes, the secret begins to unveil... where you can't just trust anybody, and where you have to learn to work together and be kind to one another in order to win against the dark terror that is hidden everywhere. Christian McKay Heidicker emphasizes that the kindness you put out into the world has a way of coming back to you through Oleo's interactions with other foxes.

Oleo experienced first hand that saving others no matter the circumstances can encourage them to reciprocate later on. Despite Julep's mean attitude towards Oleo, Oleo went out of his way to save Julep after Julep was hit by a car. Julep took this kindness to heart, even though he had a hard time showing it. Had Oleo not saved him earlier, Julep would not have been in the position to have a change of heart and save Oleo in his time of need. "You'd better live to appreciate this", Julep said (326). After a weird human picked up Oleo and took him to a strange vet, Julep ended up going after Oleo with Cozy to save him before Oleo lost his life. Even though Julep risked losing his life too in getting caught, he still went in and ended up saving both Oleo and Cozy's lives. This story is a prime example of how a person's personality can be changed because of a single act of kindness.

Another example of how kindness is cyclical is that Cozy stood up for Oleo when no one else would, and this simple act of kindness affected Oleo to the point that he sacrificed himself for Cozy. When the group of foxes were going to move far away, Cozy informed them that Oleo was caught in a trap and that the humans would catch him if they didn't rescue him quickly. She convinced the alpha, Dusty, to turn around and rescue Oleo who was in a cage, saying, "Wait! There's a fox kit, back in the trap. He might still be there", (112). Oleo took this act of kindness deep into his heart, and rescued her by jumping in front of rabies-infected Dusty who was trying to bite Cozy, and fought Dusty off by himself. As a result, Oleo got bitten instead in order to protect his friend, Cozy, and fend off Dusty until she escaped. After Oleo saved her life, she rallied his act of kindness by going with Julep to save Oleo that had been taken by a weird human and succeeded in saving Oleo's life.

Even when his own life was at risk, Dusty's previous helpfulness encouraged Oleo to still risk his life to save her. In search of food, Dusty and Oleo went into a dog food factory, with Dusty going into the food maker and Oleo standing guard. But thieves entered the building, activating the machines earlier than they had expected. Oleo jumped into the machine, in pursuit to rescue Dusty. "Coming, Dusty!", he yelled (194). There, he found Dusty hanging on a rope with her teeth, on top of the machine's spikes and rushes to bring rodents there to stop her from getting hurt. The rodent's swarmed toward Oleo, and he jumped in time for the rodents to fall in, jamming the machine before Dusty fell. Here, Oleo is grateful for Dusty's kindness in teaching him how to survive, and he saves Dusty's life just like she had done for him.

Throughout the story, Oleo helps foxes in times of need and gets saved from deadly situations in return. As the story flows, Christian McKay Heidicker encourages that you can show kindness and get it back in return, also showing trust and friendship. When Oleo first joined the foxes group, he didn't fit in so well, struggling to blend in and getting teased by others. But as he starts to save each of

their lives, he begins to earn their trust and friendship. Later on, the other foxes like Julep and Cozy save his life in return for his kindness and care. *Scary Stories For Young Foxes: The City* shows the true starting point of trust and friendship, which is kindness.