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The Oxford Companion To Classical

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A Cadmean victory (Greek: καδμεία νίκη, romanized: kadmeía níkē) is a reference to a victory involving one's own ruin, from Cadmus (Greek: Kadmos), the legendary founder of Thebes in Boeotia and the mythic bringer of script to Greece. On seeking to establish the city, Cadmus required water from a spring guarded by a water-dragon similar to the Lernaean Hydra.

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