





Filled with rage, Cadmus cried out, 'My loyal friends. I shall either avenge your deaths or become your companion!' Then, tearing a great rock from the ground, Cadmus flung it at the dragon. The rock shattered against the scaly hide. Once again, the dragon reared up, gave its shrieking cry, and lunged. Cadmus dodged aside, then drove his spear between the dragon's scales until the spear tip burst out of the serpent's back. The creature thrashed from side to side, ripping the spear from Cadmus' hands and shattering the handle, but the spearhead remained fixed in its spine. Then Cadmus drew his iron sword. He stabbed repeatedly at the creature's head, driving it back, until, with a mighty lunge, Cadmus drove the sword through the creature's throat and pinned it to a tree behind. For a moment the great serpent writhed in place, before it died upon the tree.

As the life faded from the dragon's eyes, the goddess Athena appeared beside Cadmus. She commanded the hero to cut out the dragon's teeth, give half of them to her, and then plant the rest in the ground like seeds. Cadmus did as he was instructed, then watched in amazement as armed men grew out of the ground where he had planted the teeth. Cadmus reached for his sword, but one of the newly born men told him to keep back and take no part in their affairs. So Cadmus just watched as these earth-born men attacked and killed one another, until only five remained. Then Athena appeared again and ordered the men to stop fighting and join with Cadmus. With these new companions, Cadmus went back to where the heifer had sat down. He made his sacrifice and founded a city with the help of his five companions. He named the city Thebes, and it would become one of the richest cities in the world.

