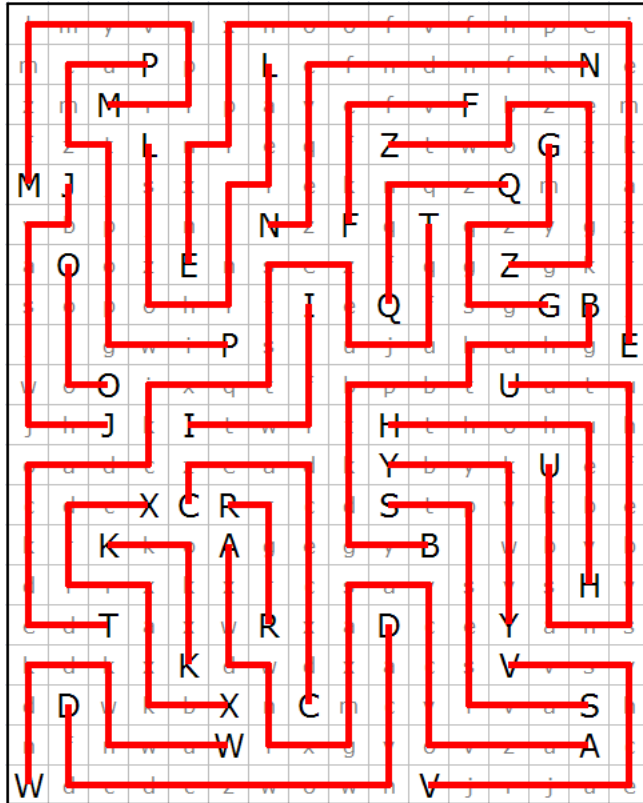


# A SHORT FUSE (Solution)

By Mike Marcelais

The first part of the puzzle is to connect the pairs of letters as indicated by the instructions. Two facts that are not given as instructions is that the paths never loop back on themselves and that every square in the grid is used. This yields this diagram:



Next, look at the lowercase letters that are on each path. On the path connecting the two 'A's, there is a pair of lowercase 'a's separated by one letter. Connect those two 'a's and get the letter in between them, 's'. Repeat this for all 26 letters of the alphabet to spell the clue "Species of world longest snake." The answer is **RETICULATED PYTHON.**