

Fullstack Development

Authentication / Authorization

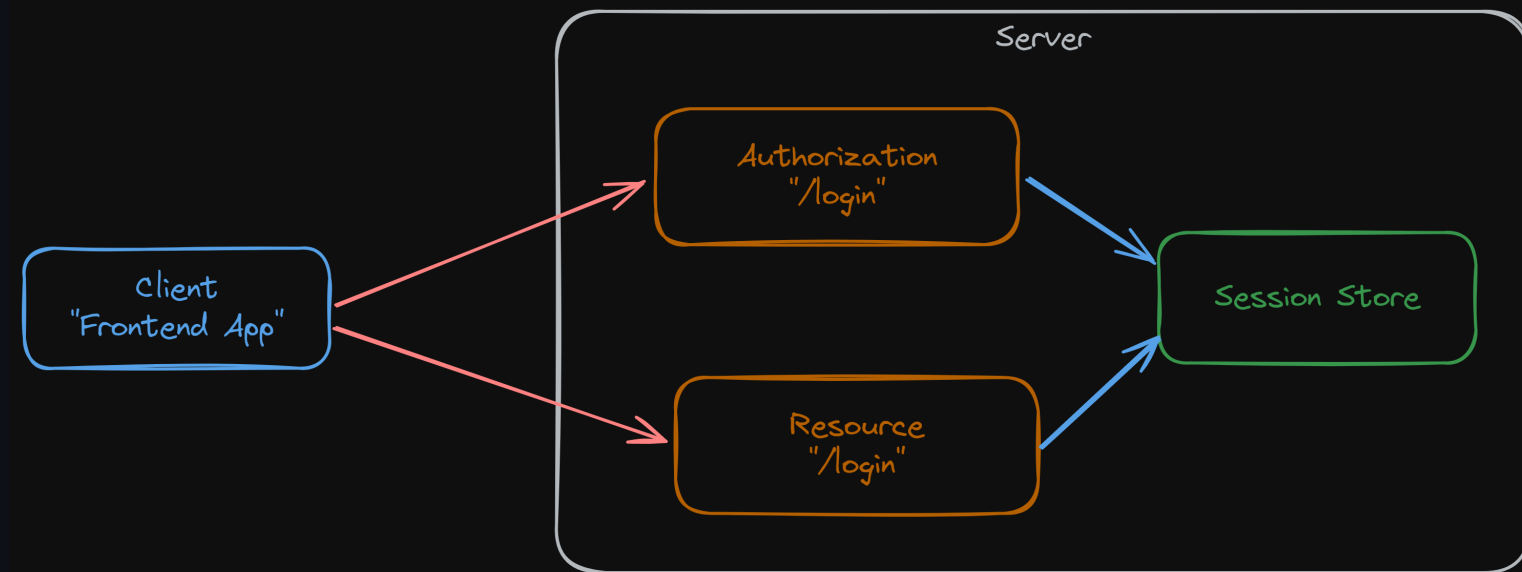
Part 3: Persisting auth's state

Session based

- Server is responsible for creating and maintaining the user's authentication state (i.e. in a database).
- After user sign-in, the server sets a cookie that contains the session ID and sends it to the browser.
 - The browser will include it in all further requests.
 - The server will use the cookie to identify the current user session from the database.

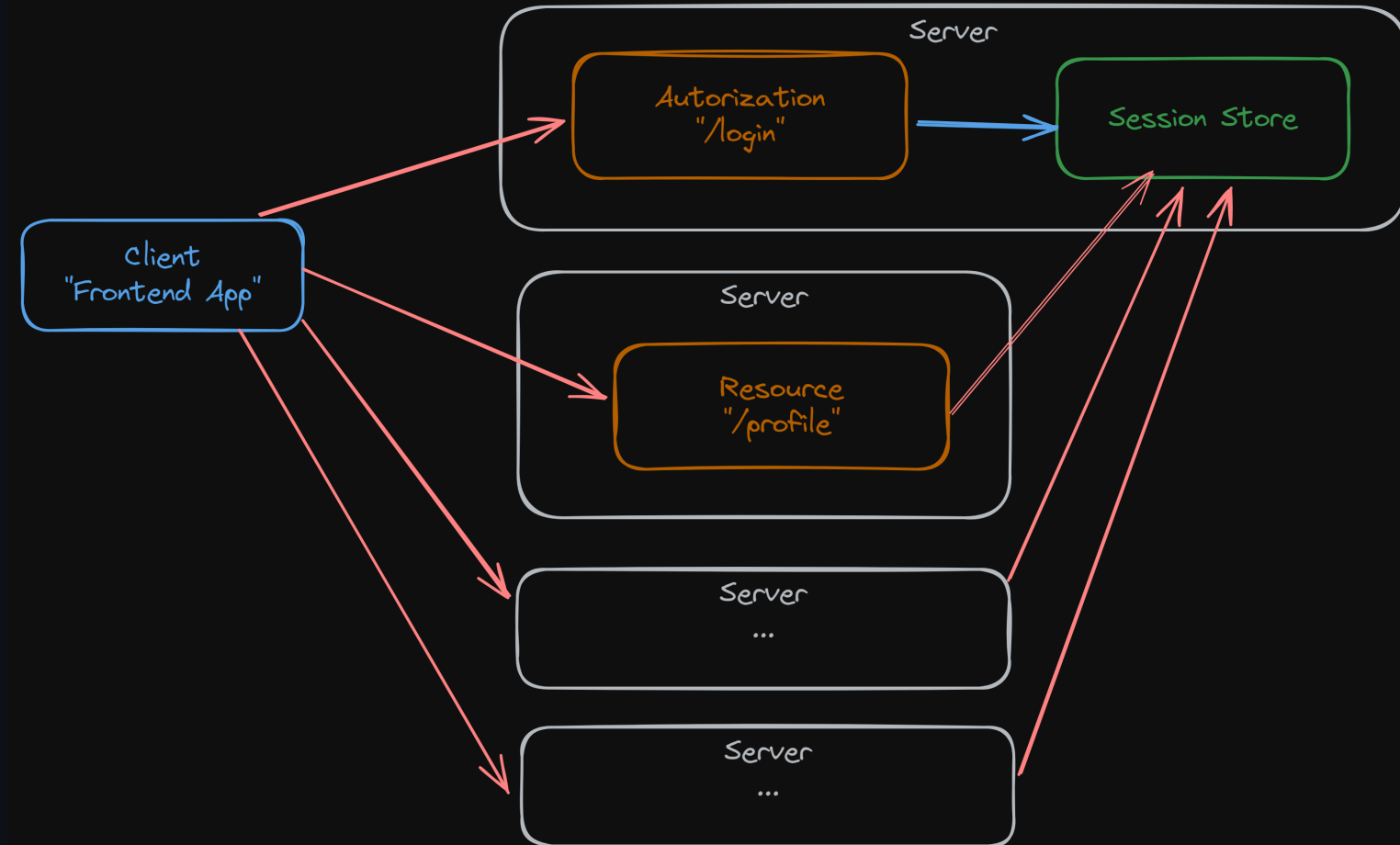
Session based

- Users' auth states are in DB.
- Need to query DB at every request.

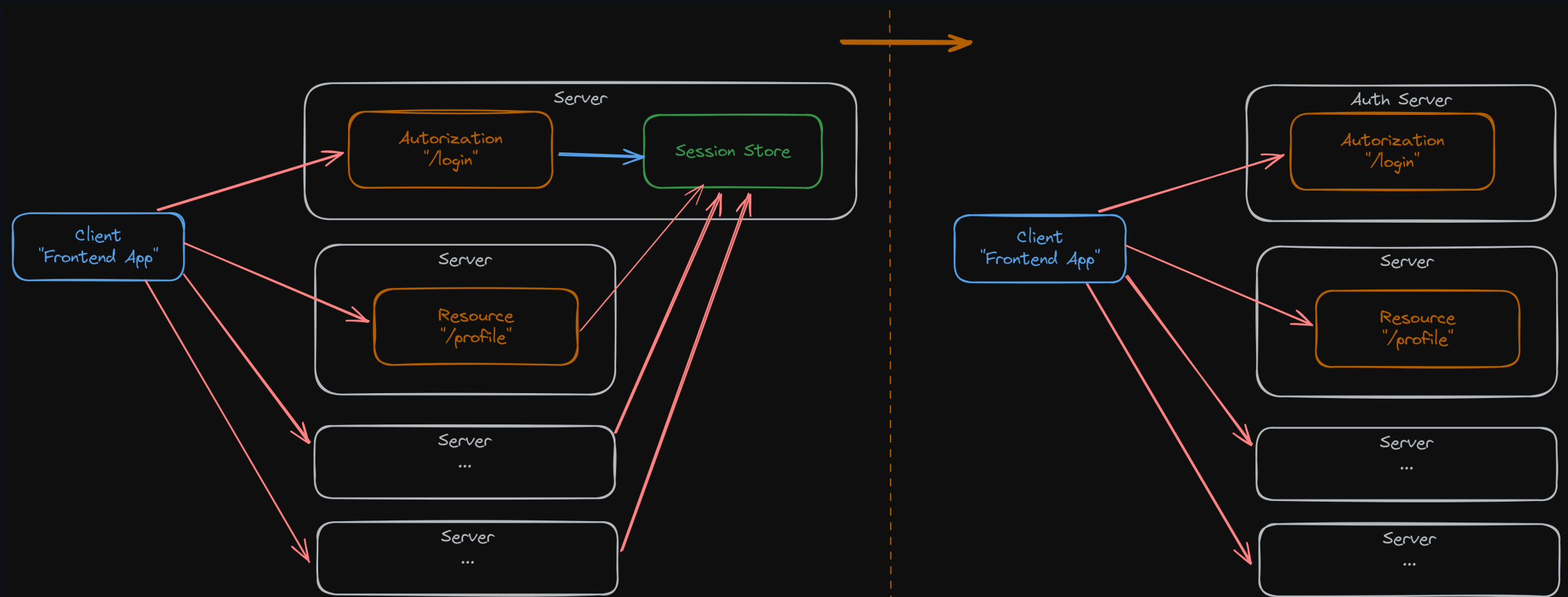


Session based

- This could be a problem in distributed system with centralized auth server.
- Session store could be overloaded.



Can do something like this?



Note that the right system is not exactly what you want to do.

Token-based

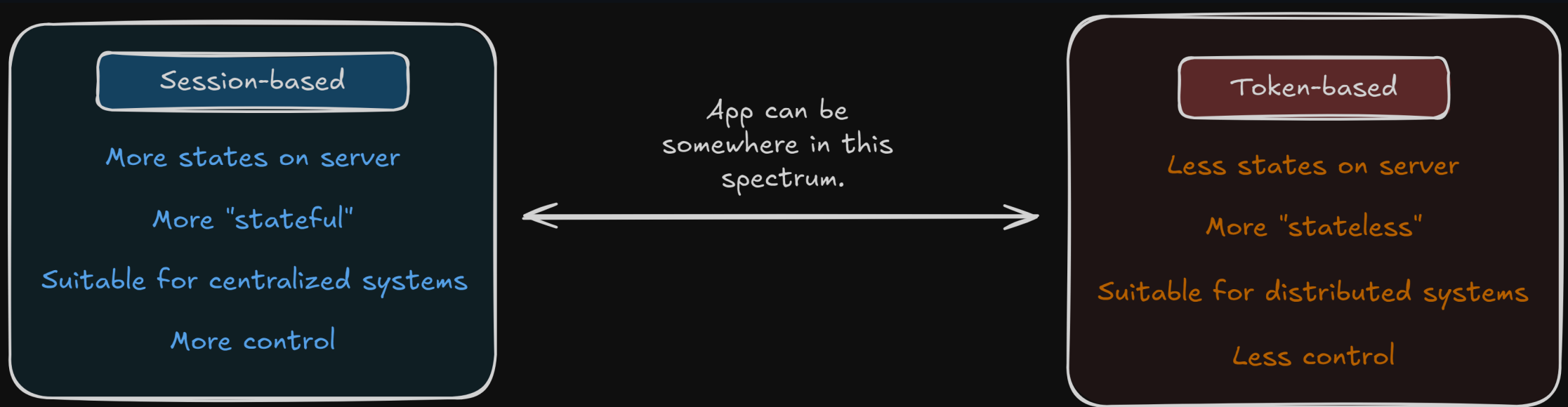
- `token` is a cryptographically signed piece of data that contains information about the authenticated user and their access permissions.
- The server will only have to verify the validity of the token rather than having it stored in a database.
 - Reduces the amount of state that needs to be stored on the server.
- While other token formats exist, JSON Web Tokens (JWTs) have become the prevailing standard for token-based approach.

JWT Test

- `git clone -b jwt https://github.com/fullstack-67/auth-mpa-v2.git auth-jwt`
- `pnpm i`
- `npx tsx ./src/test.ts`

Clarification

- It is better to think about where you put users' `auth` state.
 - `Session-based`: more states in server (*"stateful"*)
 - `Token-based`: more states in client (*stateless*)
- Using JWTs does not automatically means you are using token-based approach.
 - You can put JWTs in session cookie.
- The system can contain both approaches.



- When going token-based approach, you are losing **control** over user's state and you are making your system **less secured**.

Please do not do this.

- It is tempting to go **100% stateless** using token-based approach (JWT) to avoid dealing to storing information on server.
- Be aware of these concerns ([Ref1](#), [Ref2](#)).
 - Cannot really log out users.
 - Cannot really block users.
 - Stale data
 - Limited storage
 - JWT could be decrypted at some point.

Considering token-based approach?

- Do you have distributed system with centralized auth server?
 - If no, go session-based.
- You are concerned about overloading your database.
 - Have you considered `redis`?

Considering token-based approach?

- Have you consider the fact that modern token security is quite complex (*and will require database anyway*)?
 - Refresh tokens (revokable)
 - Allowed/Revoked lists
 - Token rotation
 - Token behavior detection

Bottom line

If you don't have database table storing `auth` in your system, there is something wrong.