

Concurrency: Processes

CSE 333 Spring 2021

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About how long did Exercise 12 take you?

- A. [0, 2) hours
- B. [2, 4) hours
- C. [4, 6) hours
- D. [6, 8) hours
- E. 8+ Hours
- F. I didn't submit / I prefer not to say

Administrivia

- ❖ hw4 due tomorrow (6/3)
 - Submissions accepted until Sunday (6/6) @ 11:59 pm
- ❖ Course evaluations!
 - Please fill them out. They help all staff members improve their skills as educators and allow us to improve the course for future offerings. 😊
 - More info on ed

Lecture Outline

- ❖ **Review: Processes vs Threads**
- ❖ `fork()` details
 - Concurrent Server with Processes
- ❖ Conclusion

Previous Lectures

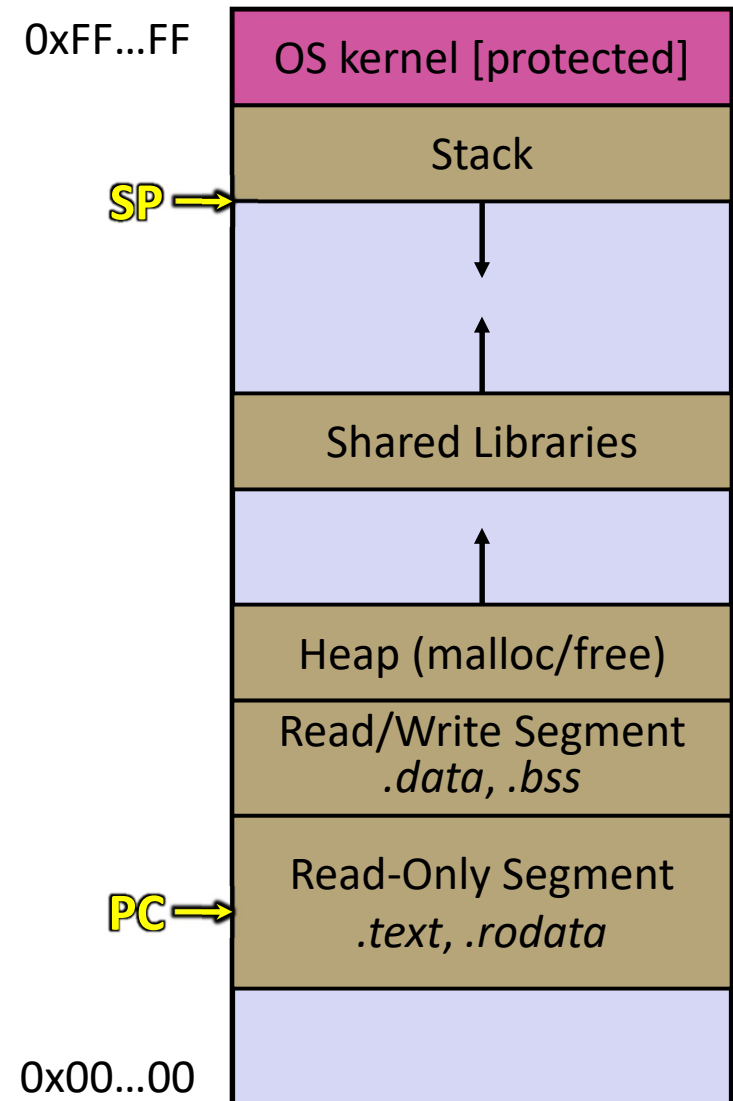
- ❖ `searchserver`
 - Sequential
 - Concurrent via forking threads – `pthread_create()`
 - **Concurrent via forking processes – fork()**
 - Concurrent via non-blocking, event-driven I/O – `select()`
 - We won't get to this 😞

- ❖ Reference: *Computer Systems: A Programmer's Perspective*, Chapter 12 (CSE 351 book)

Review: Address Spaces

- ❖ A process has its own *address space*
 - Includes segments for different parts of memory
 - A process usually has one or more threads
 - A thread tracks its current state using the **stack pointer** (SP) and **program counter** (PC)
- ❖ New processes are created with:

```
pid_t fork();
```



Main Uses of `fork()`

- Fork a child to handle some work
 - Server forks to handle a new connection
 - Web browser forks to render a new website
 - Mainly for security purposes (separate address spaces)
- Fork a child that then `exec()`s a new program
 - Shell forks and `execs` the program you want to run
 - 333 grading script **forks** and **execs** your executable
- Fork a “background” process that is not interactive
 - Runs independently, doesn’t need a user to be logged in
 - Called a “Daemon” Process in Linux



Process Isolation

- ❖ **Process Isolation** is a set of mechanisms implemented to protect processes from each other and protect the kernel from user processes.
 - Processes have separate address spaces
 - Processes have privilege levels to restrict access to resources
 - If one process crashes, others will keep running
- ❖ Inter-Process Communication (IPC) is limited, but possible
 - Pipes via `pipe()`
 - Sockets via `socketpair()`
 - Shared Memory via `shm_open()`

How Fast is `fork()` ?

- ❖ See forklatency.cc

- ❖ ~ **0.5 milliseconds** per `fork()`*
 - \therefore maximum of $(1000/0.5) = 2,000$ connections/sec/core
 - ~175 million connections/day/core
 - This is fine for most servers
 - Too slow for super-high-traffic front-line web services
 - Facebook served ~ 750 billion page views per day in 2013!
Would need 3-6k cores just to handle `fork()`, *i.e.* without doing any work for each connection

- ❖ *Past measurements are not indicative of future performance – depends on hardware, OS, software versions, ...
 - Processes are known to be even slower on Windows

How Fast is `pthread_create()` ?

- ❖ See threadlatency.cc
- ❖ ~**0.05 milliseconds** per thread creation*
 - ~10x faster than `fork()`
 - ∴ maximum of $(1000/0.05) = 20,000$ connections/sec/core
 - ~2 billion connections/day/core
- ❖ Much faster, but writing safe multithreaded code can be serious voodoo
- ❖ *Past measurements are not indicative of future performance – depends on hardware, OS, software versions, ..., but will typically be an order of magnitude faster than `fork()`

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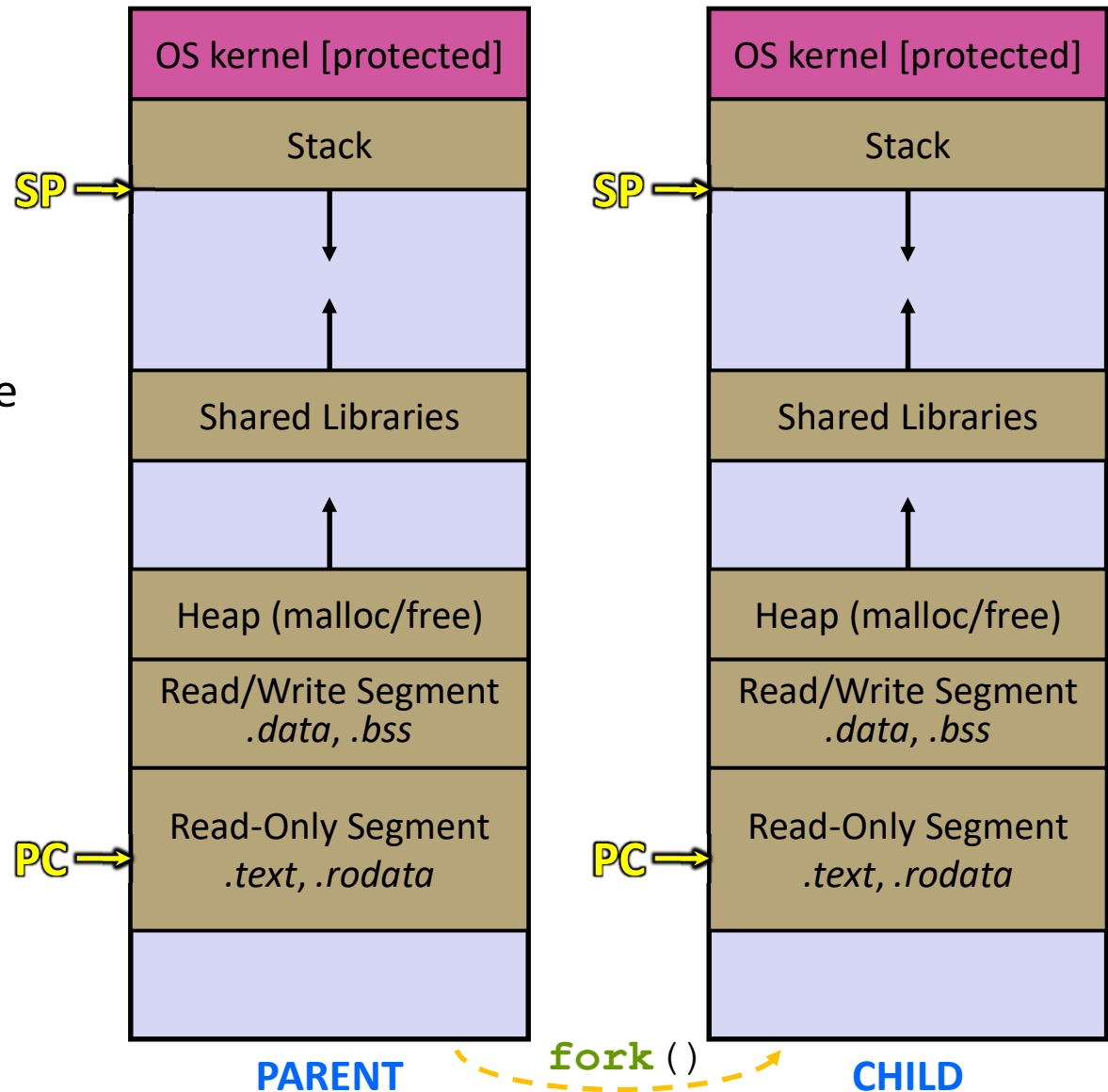
Creating New Processes

❖ `pid_t fork() ;`

- Creates a new process (the “child”) that is an *exact clone** of the current process (the “parent”)
 - *Everything is cloned except threads. Sockets, file descriptors, virtual address space, variables, etc.
- The new process has a separate virtual address space from the parent

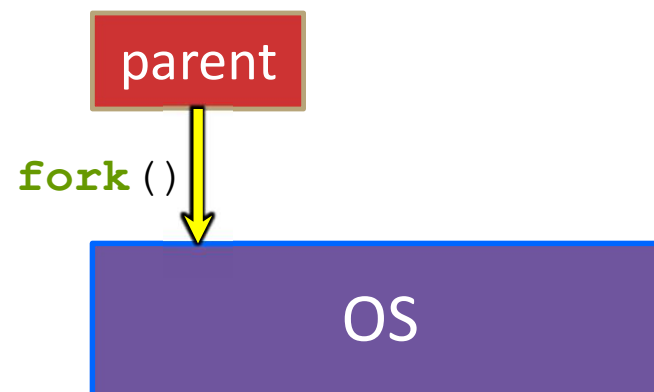
fork () and Address Spaces

- ❖ Fork causes the OS to clone the address space
 - The *copies* of the memory segments are (nearly) identical
 - The new process has *copies* of the parent's data, stack-allocated variables, open file descriptors, etc.



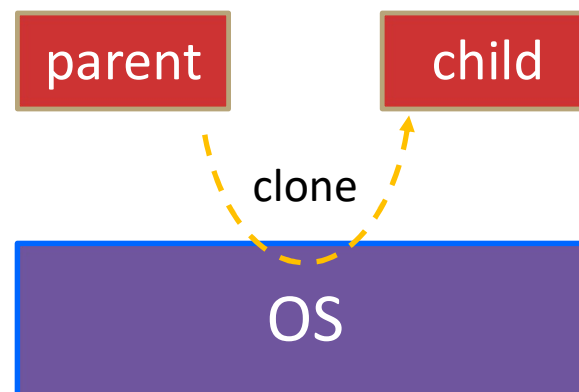
fork ()

- ❖ **fork ()** has peculiar semantics
 - The parent invokes **fork ()**
 - The OS clones the parent
 - *Both* the parent and the child return from fork
 - Parent receives child's pid
 - Child receives a 0



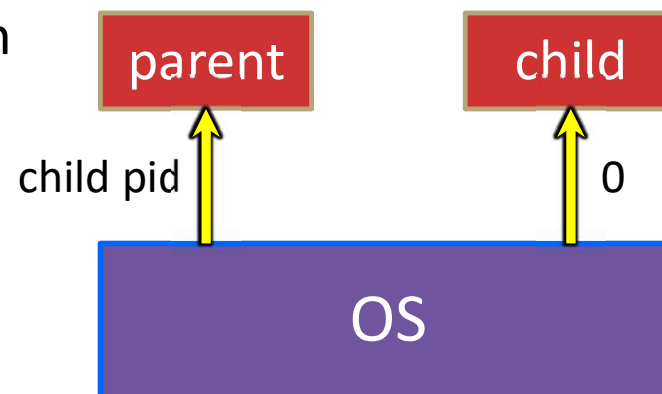
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- ❖ See `fork_example.cc`

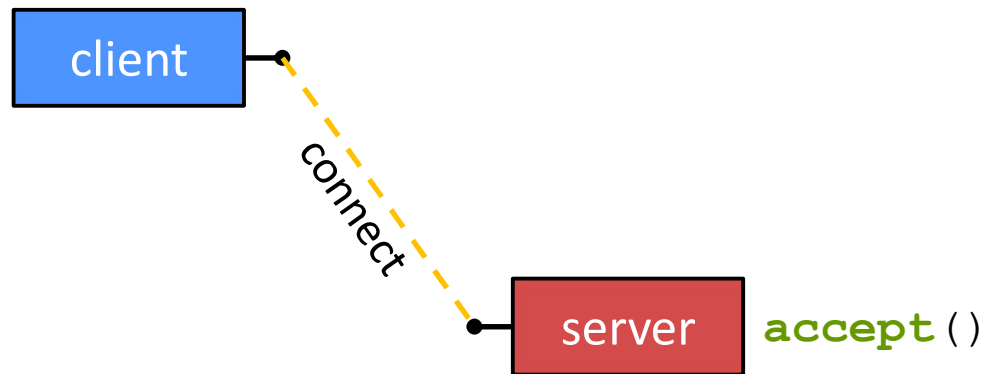
Concurrent Server with Processes

- ❖ The **parent** process blocks on **accept** () , waiting for a new client to connect
 - When a new connection arrives, the parent calls **fork** () to create a **child** process
 - The child process handles that new connection and **exit** () 's when the connection terminates
- ❖ Remember that children become “zombies” after death
 - Option A: Parent calls **wait** () to “reap” children
 - Option B: Use a **double-fork trick**

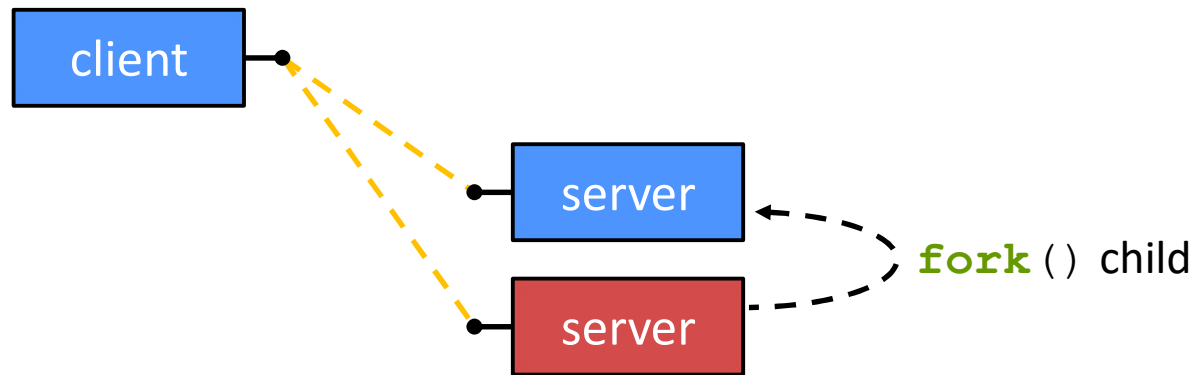
Double-fork Trick



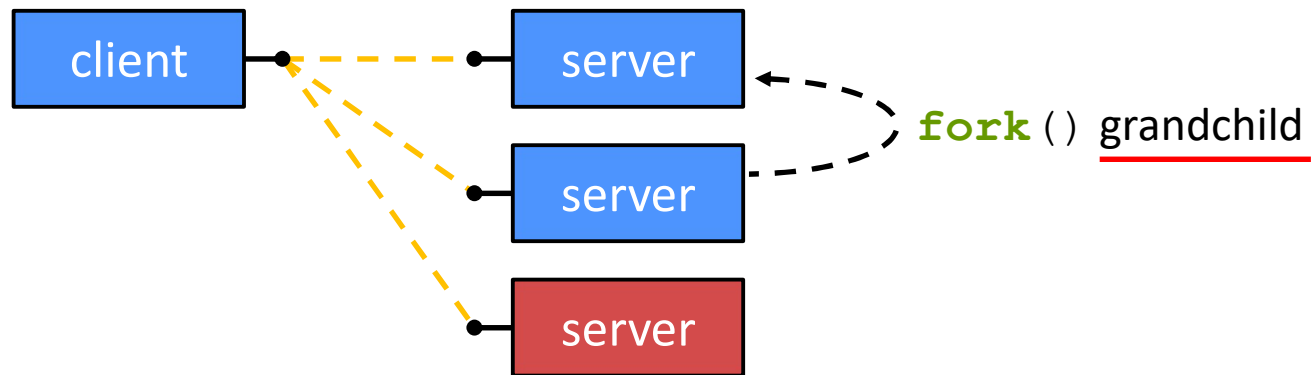
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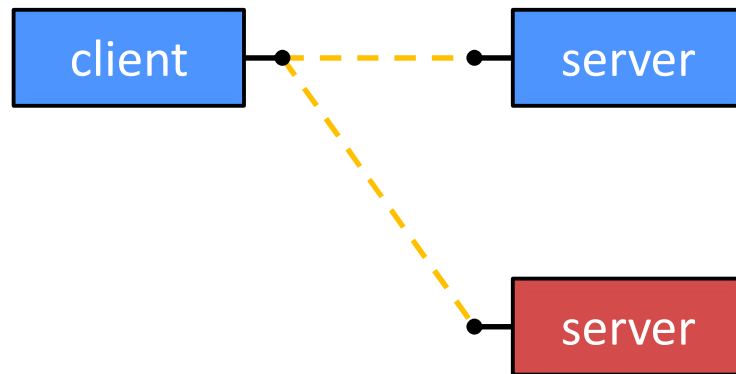
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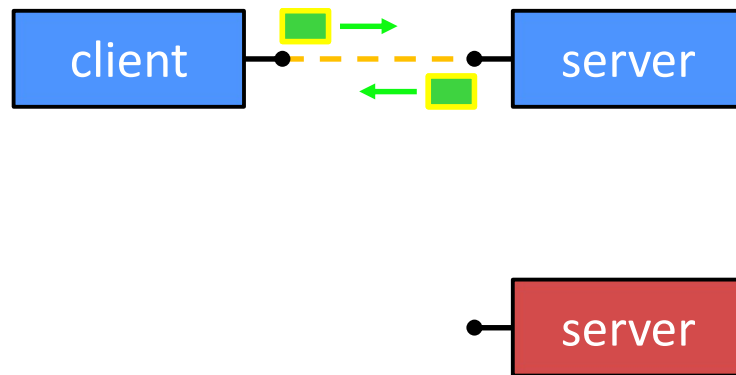


child exit()'s / parent wait()'s

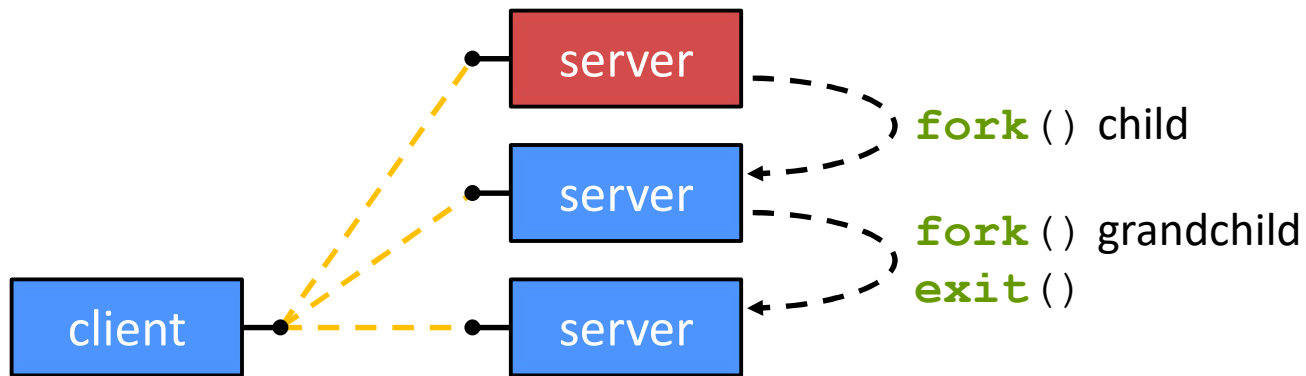
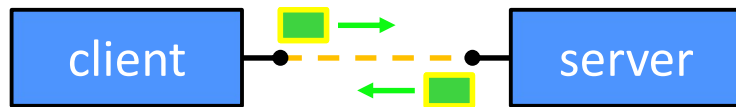
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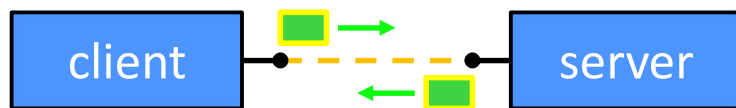
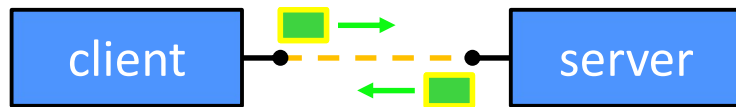
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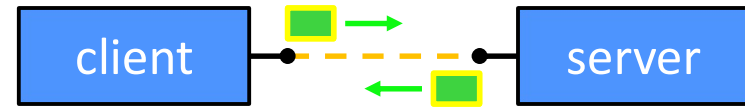
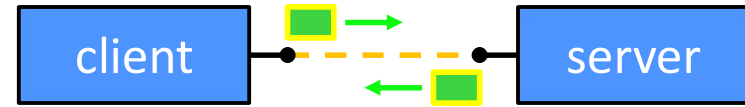
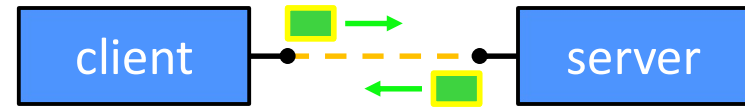
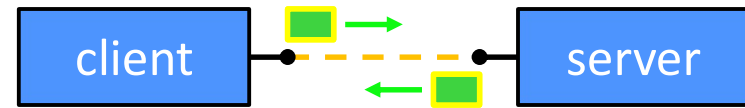
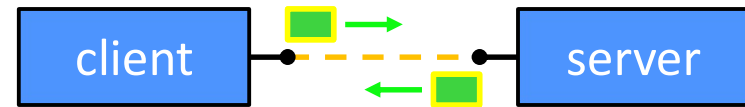
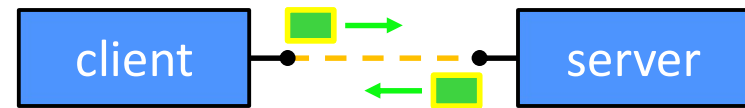
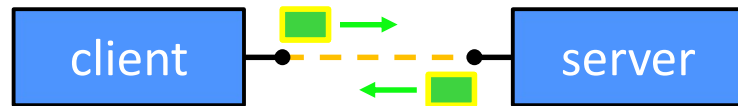
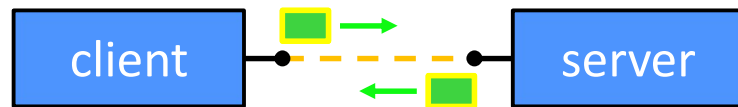
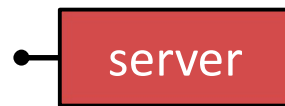
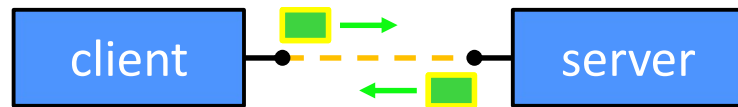
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Double-fork Trick





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- ❖ What will happen when one of the grandchildren processes finishes?
 - A. **Zombie until grandparent exits**
 - B. **Zombie until grandparent reaps**
 - C. **Zombie until init reaps**
 - D. **ZOMBIE FOREVER!!!**
 - E. **We're lost...**

Concurrent with Processes Pseudocode

❖ See [searchserver_processes/](#)

```
... // Server set up
while (1) {
    sock_fd = accept();
    pid = fork();
    if (pid == 0) {
        // ??? process

    } else {
        // ??? process

    }
}
```

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while (1) {
    sock_fd = accept();
    pid = fork();
    if (pid == 0) {
        // Child process
        pid = fork();
        if (pid == 0) {
            // Grand-child process
            HandleClient(sock_fd, ...);
        }
    } else {
        // Parent process
    }
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        exit();
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            // Grand-child process
            HandleClient(sock_fd, ...);
        }
        // Clean up resources...
        exit();
    } else {
        // Parent process
        // Wait for child to immediately die
        wait();
        close(sock_fd);
    }
}
```

Lecture Outline

- ❖ Review: Processes vs Threads
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- ❖ **Conclusion**

Why Concurrent Processes?

❖ Advantages:

- No shared memory between processes
- No need for language support; OS provides “fork”
- Concurrent execution leads to better CPU, network utilization

❖ Disadvantages:

- Processes are heavyweight
 - Relatively slow to fork
 - Context switching latency is high
- Communication between processes is complicated

Aside: Thread Pools

- ❖ In real servers, we'd like to avoid overhead needed to create a new thread or process for every request
 - We wrote a Thread Pool implementation for you in HW4

- ❖ Idea: Thread Pools:
 - Create a fixed set of worker threads when the server starts
 - When a request arrives, add it to a queue of tasks (using locks)
 - Each thread tries to remove a task from the queue (using locks)
 - When a thread is finished with one task, it tries to get a new task from the queue (using locks)