

The Way We Weren't

IN THE SECOND DECADE of the twenty-first century, the twentieth century has already become a strange land, ripe to be looked back on through TV fiction. If you were there, the results often taste wrong, especially if they look right. A mental flavor is hard to re-create; but never mind, because you won't be around long to object. Trying to be generous as I bow out, I personally am careful to give points for any attempt at fidelity to the way we were, although all too often the flashback shows strike me as adding up to a startling registration of the way we weren't. What are these young people trying to achieve, when they pour so much money, talent, and effort into telling us what they think our lives used to be like? Well, if the first thing they strive for is a financial return on investment, they're certainly achieving that. And anyway, they'd do the same for Henry VIII: *The Tudors* and *Wolf Hall* between them