

Like My Very Own Blood

jarrow

Achievement in Vidding: Shortlist 2009

The review below may contain spoilers for new *Battlestar Galactica*.

Brad: What a powerful, emotional video!

It makes an incredibly effective statement about the character of Bill Adama in BSG, but it's equally impressive as a study of several different relationships: Between Bill and Kara, and between Bill and the other members of his family. It's all reflected in this vid. Through the images of his interactions with Starbuck, you get a very insightful glimpse into the man and into how and why his life has unfolded the way it has.

Nicky: It's such a forceful, direct statement packed into a very succinct 2:06 minutes. You really get the feeling that the vidder took a lot of pains to trim all excess narrative fat from the core statement, so that what's left is this gut punch of a concept told in the most economical terms.

Brad: True, and that kind of directness is a really rare commodity, even in the best vids. Still, I think the reason it comes across so powerfully is because the vid builds in a way that feels so honest and natural.

In the first segment, Adama looks very much like a loving, paternal man. The clip choices are so incredibly smart. The cutaways to determined Starbuck at 0:08 and back to Adama both establish a protective father figure and work so extremely well with the flow of the music. The next few images of the pictures, Adama crying, the note, the hands, and the angel (FORESHADOWING ALERT!) pull you right into the emotion of the theme and the relationship.

As with many great vids, it's saying some very complex... and yet it looks astoundingly SIMPLE because of how well the vidder executes the concept.

Nicky: I love how the angel figurine is used in varying ways throughout the vid. At this point, as in canon, it's an expression of fatherly love and Adama's strong bond with Kara.

It's great to see all these different images of hands in the first verse, especially from 0:25 - 0:30, contrasting Adama's loving touch against Kara's mother pulling away. Straight away he is set up to be a replacement who would be a better parent for her than her mother. It also foreshadows nicely into the later parallels with young Kara.

Brad: The forehead kiss at 0:31 is a huge moment in the vid because it tells us beyond a shadow of a doubt (1) who the narrator is, (2) what he's saying, (3) and what the vid will show us. And then immediately after that at 0:33, we get that *chilling* moment when he pulls his hand away and begins to do exactly what he promised.

Nicky: That moment is particularly effective because in the context of that moment, it doesn't jump out particularly as a bad thing. It's only when you look back on it afterwards that you start to see how it was the first moment that cracks begin to show.

Brad: The following shots of Adama are looming and domineering, and the jump cuts create a fractured feeling here that I think really helps to serve the statement. My favorite is the one at 0:51, which makes the smile look absolutely diabolical, and is followed by the most Horrible Hug In History.

Nicky: I think our readings here differ because of the context of those clips, which comes from one of the more touching Adama and Kara arcs. I personally think this segment is still a showcase of when their relationship is *right*. Which only highlights the moments that hint at what's to come, such as Adama's unaccountably stern expression at 0:55.

Brad: The eyes at 0:55 build to the scream and crying Starbuck - all the while with Bill pledging to love her "like my very own son," whom we see in the next sequence trying to talk to him and failing, as usual. That's followed by his wife, and we see mirrored images of his relationship with Kara.

Nicky: Lee at 1:04 and Adama's wife at 1:06 are two extremely effective parallels. I just love the very similar positioning and expression of Adama in both of these settings, his passivity offset by the violently angry Kara counterpart in both instances. Adama doesn't show much expression at the best of times, which - so I've heard! - makes it rather hard to vid him as a character. By the same token, that lack of expression really works to the advantage of Like My Very Own Blood. Both Lee and his mother have such fantastically telling expressions in these clips; I have to admit that I'd forgotten the context that these clips come from, but the way Jarrow uses them leaves no doubt as to the kinds of things that they're saying to Adama.

Brad: When the punches start flying at 1:15, it's expected but not any less shocking. The first time I saw it, I thought "Wow, well that's literal." No need for any metaphors here!

Again at 1:20, I think Jarrow's jump cuts really work in his favor in terms of creating a staccato rhythm that makes the relationship and the characters feel broken in a marvelously visual way.

Nicky: My favourite jump cuts came a little earlier, around the 1:15 mark. I love that contrast between the fast cuts and the very slow internal motion of Lee being punched out, followed by another abrupt and brutal face punch.

Brad: The second chorus is so emotionally kinetic, with Kara's hands going to her head, images of her as a child, Adama's screams - all so musical and horrific, and all with a sense of sort of spinning out of control.

Nicky: I really like the hail back to young Kara and the abuse she received at her mother's hands. It's chilling to think that only a minute ago Adama has been presented as a much better alternative, whereas now they're virtually the same person, for example through the similar blocking at 1:31.

Brad: At 1:36 it looks for all the world like he has become a horror movie monster chasing her through the hallways.

Nicky: That's some very clever editing indeed.

Brad: The following segment is just TOO CLOSE visually, in the best possible sense, and the attention to detail on the cymbals and percussion is striking in more ways than one. All of the push-ins through the segment make it even more so. When Adama breaks the mirror at 1:44, wow. I kind of wanted to stop the vid and take a breath. The angel dissolves into Kara locked away (/FORESHADOWING)...

Nicky: Which, again, is so clever because it takes an image and an association that the audience is familiar with in context, and basically turns it on its head. The angel is no longer a symbol of Adama and Kara's unity but of their divide, of Kara defeated.

Brad: And it ends with Adama walking away, his promise fulfilled. *cringe*



THE FOURTH WALL
