

# Film Review: In A Better World



Winner of the 2011 Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film, Susanne Bier's *In A Better World* explores themes of revenge and forgiveness whilst maintaining an ever-present and engaging sense of drama.

The film's parallel plotlines concern the fledgling friendship between two young boys, Elias and Christian, and the injustices Elias' father Anton (Mikael Persbrandt), a doctor at a Sudanese refugee camp, faces on a daily basis.

Elias (Markus Rygaard), a Swedish boy living in Denmark, is being bullied at school until the arrival of Christian (William Jøhnk Juels Nielsen), who is still mourning the loss of his recently deceased mother. Christian's anger and frustration manifests itself in his violent and unflinching manner which entices the naïve Elias, and in the absence of the pacifist Anton, the two attempt to enact justice as they see fit in a seemingly unfair world.

Bier's craft is impeccable; she balances these seemingly disparate but thematically relevant plots with a dramatic flair that provokes relentless tension. Jumping to and from Denmark and Sudan initially relieves this anxiety, but the audience is quickly reminded of the universal permeation of these concepts and the struggle they present to perceptions of masculinity.

Do not miss *In A Better World* at [The Filmhouse](#) from Friday.