



# IF I COULD ONLY HIBERNATE (Baavgai Bolohson)

25th  
Year!

Autumn  
Season  
2024

**Release:** 2023

**Cert (UK):** 12A, F

**Country:** Mongolia

**Language:** In Mongolian with English subtitles.

**Runtime:** 1 hour 36 mins

**Director:** Zoljargal Purevdash

**Written by:** Zoljargal Purevdash

**Cinematography:** Davaanyam Delgerjargal

**Cast:** Taivanbat Alexandar, Batmandakh Batchuluun, Tuguldur Batsaikhan



This was the first Mongolian film to be shown at Cannes Film Festival. It follows the daily life of Ulzii, a young 15-year-old boy, who is torn between personal ambition and family loyalty.

Ulzii is a brilliant scholar at school, pushed by his teacher to go for a physics prize which could lead him to escape his life of poverty. At home, he lived with his mother and three other children; his father had lead them from the countryside to the town for a job and then 'had the audacity to die', leaving the mother to cope alone. This she has failed to do, becoming an alcoholic along the way. When she leaves to go back to the country, Ulzii is left with two siblings to keep fed...and warm: the winter can get to  $-35^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Eventually his loyalty makes him take a job, but how can he keep up his studies?

The film is written, directed and produced by Zoljargal Purevdash. She says she wanted to show that a lot of the high pollution in the town is caused by poverty: the people are forced to burn large amounts of coal just to survive. She also wanted to show the use of child labour, all in the hope that the people can unite to stop the pollution and the poverty. She has done this in a film which is not overtly political. - *'There's a genuine tenderness between these siblings that brings moments of laughter and warmth; the only kind to be found in the freezing Mongolian winter, which soon infiltrates the yurt...this is a family home, after all, and there are photos on the wall, toys scattered on the floor and a television in the corner. Indeed, the whole film is careful to portray its characters as dynamic individuals attempting to break free of economic shackles rather than victims of circumstance'* - Nikki Baughan, Screen Daily.