

THE PHOENIX



DARK MATTER

An astonishingly unpredictable ending

By **GERALD PEARY**

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Liu Xing (a likable Liu Ye) is an ambitious young astrophysicist from Beijing who's frustrated that Communism doesn't allow him to challenge his professors. So he's psyched to arrive at an unnamed university in the American Southwest where he can study under his scientist hero, Jacob Reiser (a craven Aidan Quinn), who's world-famous for his cosmic string theory. But Reiser's informality barely hides his need to be worshipped by his graduate students. So when Liu comes up with his own cosmological theory about "dark matter" in the universe, Reiser turns on him and rejects his proposal for a PhD thesis. This first film by Chinese director Chen Shi-Zheng and American screenwriter Billy Shebar is an intelligent, well-acted TV-level movie (Meryl Streep scores, no surprise, as a do-gooder rich lady), but with an astonishingly unpredicted ending. *90 minutes | Kendall Square*

