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XIAO WU. In a provincial Chinese backwater a petty thief leads a tentative existence. He resists any emotional display but this is natural in a social environment that has neither understanding or compassion for individuality. Gradually though, through various everyday encounters, Xiao Wu, the title character, has his soul revealed, and the film ends with an emotional power rarely achieved by more experienced filmmakers. The triumph is that the director, Jia Zhangke, is fresh from the Beijing Film Academy, and has cast his gritty feature with non-professional actors who only add to the convincing realism of the film. An extraordinary portrait of contemporary Chinese life. China, 1997. 107 min.

10D. Sat. April 10 at 9:00 PM

11A. Sun. April 11 at 12:00 noon

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