

# #1 - Examiner, The Bug, Schwartz, Abrams

*New York, 1913, a medical screening area, Ellis Island. The EXAMINER is at his desk, which is cluttered with paper and ledgers. In between is THE BUG, watching the steamship, his back to the table. THE BUG carries a notepad and pen.*

*THE BUG (turning to the EXAMINER):* Another one on the way.

*EXAMINER (indicating the audience):* Riffraff and scum, the whole lot of ‘em! ...Sly and crafty eyes, lopsided faces, sloping brows—all unmistakably criminal types.

*THE BUG:* How many from Russia?

*EXAMINER:* Why Russia?

*THE BUG:* Why not Russia?

*EXAMINER (looking through a ledger):* Well, let’s see. In the last thirty years... (*the EXAMINER calculates*) A million and a half!

*THE BUG:* Thirty more years, and we’ll be overrun with them.

*EXAMINER:* Or with their diseases. They try to hide them, but I can see them in one glance— physical ones and moral. (*THE BUG scoffs*). I’m serious.

*THE BUG:* That I need to see.

*EXAMINER:* It’s easy with practice. Watch.

*The EXAMINER scans the audience.*

*EXAMINER:* Hey, you over there. Yeah, you—come here!

*From the audience, SCHWARTZ enters timidly, hands over his papers; the EXAMINER looks them over.*

*EXAMINER (reading):* Jacob Schwartz ... (*to THE BUG*): A Russian.

*THE BUG:* Speak of the devil, and he will come.

*EXAMINER (assuming a posture):* One glance, six details! Scalp, face, neck, hands, posture and general condition—both mental and physical. (*to THE BUG*): Hm...Sickly. Now to check the usual hiding places. (*roughly doing this*): Unbutton the collar to check for goiter... No. Put aside the blanket to check for deformities... No. Remove the hat to check for ringworm... No. Peel back the

eyelid for trachoma... (SCHWARTZ *is in great pain.*). That's the sneakiest one in a way.  
(*disappointed*): No trachoma. ...I know there's something wrong with him. I mean...he's defective

*THE BUG*: Hm. Like a cheap automobile.

*EXAMINER* (*eyeing* SCHWARTZ): Maybe he's just stupid. I check for that too.

*THE BUG*: We certainly don't need any more morons.

*EXAMINER*: No, we don't...Tell me, Jacob. What's the difference between a house and a stable?

*THE BUG* : Good question!

*EXAMINER* (*to* *THE BUG*): You find out a lot this way.

*SCHWARTZ*: I don't understand.

*EXAMINER*: Just answer the question.

*SCHWARTZ*: A house is where people live...

*EXAMINER*: And the stable?

*SCHWARTZ*: Animals?

*THE BUG*: Damn.

*EXAMINER*: Wait, I know. He doesn't breathe right. (*The EXAMINER feels SCHWARTZ'S chest, then gives it a thump, listens, and nods. To SCHWARTZ*): Turn around. (*The EXAMINER finds a piece of chalk and draws an H on SCHWARTZ'S back; to THE BUG*): His heart! Bad circulation. (*to SCHWARTZ*): Well, go on! (*SCHWARTZ goes out*). They'll check him more thoroughly over there. But they rarely send them back as they should.

*The EXAMINER makes some notes. THE BUG scans the audience.*

*THE BUG* (*pointing*): Try that one.

*EXAMINER*: Why him?

*THE BUG*: He looks...ill.

*The EXAMINER beckons ABRAMS who approaches and hands over his papers. ABRAMS and THE BUG size each other up.*

*EXAMINER (reading):* Jacob Abrams. See? They're all Jacobs. (*stands and gives ABRAMS "the glance," disappointed*): Generally healthy.

*THE BUG (pressing him):* But mentally?

*EXAMINER:* No, they all look like that. Like scared sheep.

*THE BUG (aggressive):* Ask him anyway.

The *EXAMINER rises and approaches ABRAMS.*

*EXAMINER:* All right, Jacob... What's the difference between a house and a stable?

*ABRAMS:* There is no difference.

*EXAMINER:* What?!

*ABRAMS:* Animals live in both. One animal works, and the other eats and gets fat. Both die.

*EXAMINER (to THE BUG):* Very good. He might have slipped by me. (*to ABRAMS*): Turn around.

*The EXAMINER chalks an X on ABRAMS' back. THE BUG eyes ABRAMS intently.*

*EXAMINER (showing THE BUG the X):* Mental Defect Suspected. (*to ABRAMS, pointing off*): Go there... Understand? (*ABRAMS goes out; THE BUG watches him.*)

*EXAMINER (making notes):* Well, there's your feature story. Three more boatloads of vermin to dilute the gene pool. I say the country's full, go home!

*THE BUG (scanning the audience):* Any one of them could be an anarchist.

*EXAMINER:* Yes! It's spreading like a disease. They come to this country just to blow it up!

*THE BUG:* If only there were an exam for that!

*EXAMINER:* Well, the police ask them that right over there.

*THE BUG:* You're kidding. What do they say?

*EXAMINER:* I dunno, some Russian crap, I guess.

*THE BUG:* That I have to see. *THE BUG moves between the panels.*

*EXAMINER:* Hey, the press aren't allowed over there. (*THE BUG ignores him.*)