

Collegedunia NCERT Notes

NCERT Revision Notes

Chapter 2: A Pair of Mustachios

These notes help students revise Mulk Raj Anand's story through plot flow, character contrast, moustache symbolism, satire, irony and exam answer frames.

Also see:

[Chapter 2 NCERT Solutions](#)

Practise textbook answers for A Pair of Mustachios.

[Chapter 2 NCERT Book PDF](#)

Read the official source chapter before revision.

[Chapter 2 Handwritten Notes](#)

Use visual notes for last-minute recap.

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1 Chapter Snapshot

A Pair of Mustachios is a satirical story about how social rank can be guarded through absurd symbols. A tiny twist in a moneylender's moustache starts a conflict with a proud but poor nobleman.

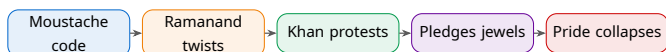
1.1 Core facts

Point	What to remember	Exam use
Author	Mulk Raj Anand, Indian English fiction writer.	Mention for context.
Central symbol	Different moustache styles mark different classes.	Use for theme and satire.
Main conflict	Ramanand twists his goat moustache toward tiger style.	Use for plot summary.
Khan's response	Khan Azam Khan sees it as an insult to inherited honour.	Use for character sketch.
Ending force	Moneylending logic defeats feudal pride step by step.	Use for irony.

Core idea

The story is comic on the surface, but its target is serious. Anand mocks a society where pride, class and status are attached to outward signs.

Story movement



1.2 Quick reading route

- First read the story as a satire on class symbols.
- Then follow the bargaining contest between Ramanand and Khan.
- Finally explain how economic power defeats inherited prestige.

First revision move

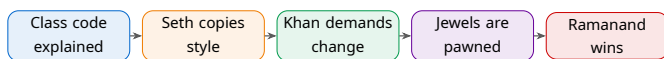
Do not treat the moustache as only a funny detail. In this story, it works like a public badge of rank.

2 Plot Flow and Conflict

The plot grows from a small visible act: one end of a moustache turns upward. Anand expands this tiny gesture into a full exposure of social insecurity.

2.1 Five-stage plot

Conflict over honour



Repetition as structure

Each visit repeats the same bargain. Khan wants a moustache tip lowered, while Ramanand asks for more valuable property.

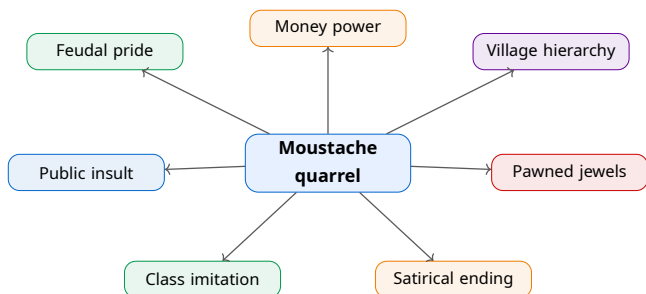
2.2 Outer and inner conflict

Conflict	Where it appears	Meaning
Khan vs Ramanand	Shop scene and repeated demands.	Old prestige faces new money.
Honour vs hunger	Khan needs food and cash.	Need weakens pride.
Symbol vs reality	Tiger moustache against empty property.	Rank signs hide poverty.
Tradition vs commerce	Noble style meets moneylender's method.	Economic power controls the result.

Plot mistake

Do not write that the quarrel is only about personal vanity. It is about class boundaries, social imitation and economic power.

Conflict web

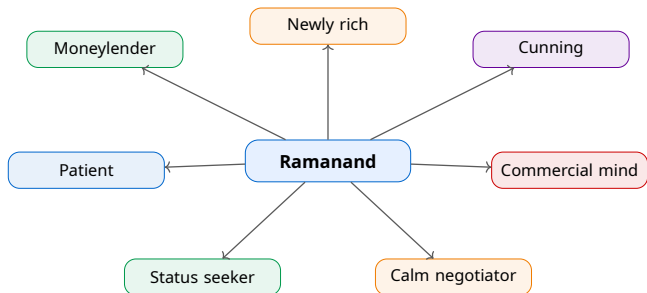


3 Ramanand as a Character

Seth Ramanand is a grocer and moneylender. He is socially ambitious, careful, patient and practical. He understands that money can make pride bend.

3.1 Character traits

Ramanand character map



Character answer order

Begin with Ramanand's profession, then his goat moustache, then his calm bargaining, and end with his victory over Khan's pride.

3.2 Evidence points for answers

- He profits from the fall in wheat prices by buying crops cheaply.
- He twists his goat moustache until it almost resembles a tiger moustache.
- He lowers one tip when business requires politeness.
- He refuses full humiliation unless Khan pledges more valuables.
- He turns each demand into a moneylending advantage.

Public signs of status

People still use clothes, brands, vehicles and

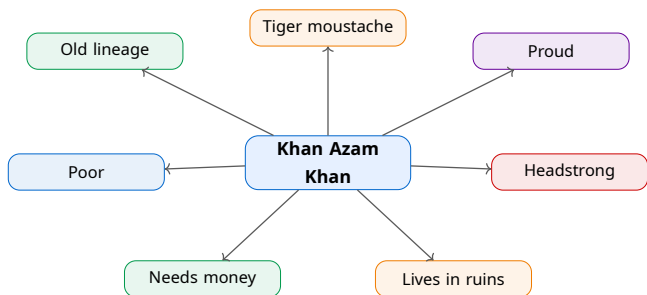
titles to signal status. Anand's story helps readers see how fragile such public signs can be.

4 Khan Azam Khan as a Character

Khan Azam Khan is dignified, handsome and proud of ancestry, but his material condition is weak. His pride is larger than his possessions.

4.1 Character traits

Khan character map



Character contrast

Khan has inherited prestige without wealth. Ramanand has wealth without old prestige. The conflict comes from this imbalance.

4.2 Evidence points for answers

- He claims descent from an old Afghan family linked to Mughal courts.
- He wears a tiger moustache as a marker of noble status.
- He is forced to pawn his wife's nose-ring for food.
- He values the moustache code more than family property.
- His anger shows how status anxiety can become foolish.

Character mistake

Do not make Khan only a comic fool. He is also a figure of social decline, trapped between inherited pride and present poverty.

5 Moustache Symbolism

The moustache styles form the story's symbolic language. They mark class divisions more openly than speech, clothes or legal documents.

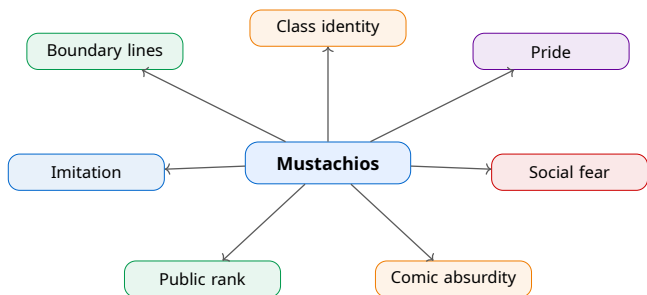
5.1 Symbol table

Moustache	Wearer or class	Symbolic meaning
Lion	Rajas, maharajas, nawabs and generals.	Highest visible power.
Tiger	Feudal gentry and old nobility.	Inherited honour and stubborn pride.
Goat	Nouveau riche and shopkeeper class.	Uncertain status and commercial ambition.
Charlie Chaplin	Lower middle class.	Compromise and imitation.
Sheep or mouse	Labourers and peasants.	Low social ranking.

LTGCSM

Remember the status ladder as LTGCSM: Lion, Tiger, Goat, Chaplin, Sheep, Mouse.

Symbol map



5.2 How the symbol works

The moustache is small, but it carries a large social meaning. When Ramanand raises the tips, he seems to cross a boundary that Khan believes belongs only to his class.

Symbol answer

*Always connect the moustache to hierarchy.
Without that link, the answer becomes a simple description of facial hair.*

6 Satire and Humour

Anand's satire exposes the absurd seriousness with which people protect class privilege. The narrator's tone is witty, but the social criticism is sharp.

6.1 Satirical targets

Target	Story detail	Critical point
Class prejudice	Each moustache style belongs to a social group.	Hierarchy is treated as natural.
Feudal pride	Khan defends the tiger moustache.	Old honour is hollow without justice.
Commercial greed	Ramanand uses every demand as a bargain.	Money turns emotion into transaction.
Social imitation	Goat style almost becomes tiger style.	Status can be performed and copied.

Reading satire

*Satire makes readers laugh first, then think.
Here the comic moustache dispute reveals real cruelty in class divisions.*

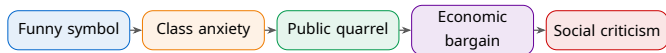
6.2 Humour techniques

- Exaggeration makes moustache styles sound like official social laws.
- The narrator's mock-serious tone treats a ridiculous code as if it were sacred.
- Ramanand's calm bargaining contrasts with Khan's dramatic anger.
- The repeated lowering of moustache tips turns honour into a shop transaction.

Satire mistake

Do not call the story light comedy only. It is satire because humour attacks social pride, hierarchy and greed.

Satire chain



7 Themes in A Pair of Mustachios

The main themes are social hierarchy, false prestige, economic power, imitation, tradition and the absurdity of outward symbols.

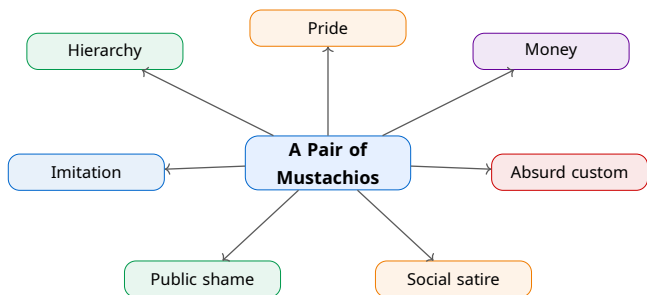
7.1 Theme grid

Theme	Story evidence	Answer line
Class hierarchy	Moustache styles divide society.	Rank is made visible through symbols.
False prestige	Khan has pride but little property.	Inherited honour cannot feed a family.
Economic power	Ramanand controls loans and pledges.	Money defeats feudal claims.
Imitation	The goat moustache rises toward tiger style.	Status symbols can be copied.
Satire	A small moustache tip causes crisis.	Anand mocks empty social boundaries.

CFEIS

Remember the themes as CFEIS: Class, False prestige, Economic power, Imitation and Satire.

Theme map



7.2 Theme explanation

The story shows that class pride often depends on symbols that are unstable. A moustache can be twisted, lowered, copied or sold into meaning by social pressure.

Theme answer

Write one sentence on the comic surface and one on the social criticism. That balance fits Anand's satire.

8 Language, Tone and Narration

The narrator uses a conversational and ironic tone. The opening classification of moustaches sounds like a comic social science chart.

8.1 Tone markers

Feature	Where it appears	Effect
Mock-serious style	The long list of moustache classes.	Makes social custom look absurd.
Irony	A noble man pawns family jewels over moustache tips.	Shows the gap between pride and reality.
Colloquial insults	The quarrel in the shop.	Adds drama and social heat.
Economic detail	Loans, pledges, wheat prices and jewellery.	Grounds satire in real village power.

Narrator's method

The narrator does not preach against hierarchy directly. He lets the moustache code look ridiculous in its own words.

8.2 Vocabulary focus

- Nouveau riche means newly rich people trying to gain social status.

- Blue blood means noble birth or aristocratic lineage.
- Bluff of a rascal suggests false claims made to impress others.
- Goods and chattels means movable property or possessions.
- Asked sourly means asked in an angry or unpleasant way.

Vocabulary mistake

Do not define nouveau riche as simply rich. The phrase means newly rich, often with insecure social acceptance.

9 NCERT Answer Frames

Most questions from this chapter ask students to explain character, satire and symbols. Use short points linked to clear story evidence.

9.1 Four-step answer method

Answer ladder

1. Name the social idea



2. Give the story detail



3. Explain the satire or irony



4. Close with Anand's criticism

SEIC

Use SEIC: State, Evidence, Interpret, Conclude. It keeps literary answers clear.

9.2 Common question types

Question type	What to include	What to avoid
Moustache symbolism	Class code, tiger style, goat style.	Do not describe styles without meaning.
Khan sketch	Pride, poverty, old lineage and anger.	Do not ignore his economic need.
Ramanand sketch	Cunning, patient and commercially powerful.	Do not call him brave.
Satire	Mock-serious tone and class absurdity.	Do not call it only comedy.
Ending irony	Jewels lost while moustache tips move.	Do not miss the role of money.

Exam phrasing

Use precise lines such as: The story satirises a society where a moustache tip can become a boundary of class.

Why it matters

The chapter trains students to question signs of status. It asks whether honour is real if it depends on public display.

10 Important Lines and Interpretive Points

The chapter's important points are not isolated quotations only. They are the repeated links between moustache style, rank, bargaining and public humiliation.

10.1 Point-bank for revision

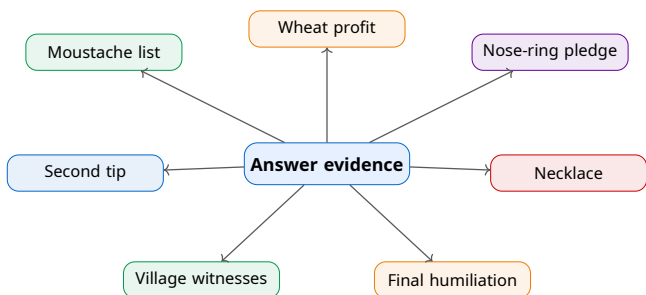
- Mustachios mark class boundaries in the story world.
- Ramanand is a moneylender whose wealth gives practical power.
- Khan Azam Khan has noble pride but little material security.

- The villagers watch the conflict and quietly accept the hierarchy.
- The ending shows pride being bought down through business deals.

Quotation mistake

Do not invent direct quotations if you cannot remember them. A clear paraphrase of the shop scene is safer than a wrong quote.

Revision point web



10.2 Comparison with common student errors

Weak answer	Better answer	Why better
It is about moustaches.	It is about class pride expressed through moustaches.	It names the social meaning.
Khan is angry.	Khan is angry because his inherited rank is being imitated.	It explains motive.
Ramanand wins.	Ramanand wins because economic power controls Khan's need.	It links plot to theme.
The story is funny.	The humour exposes class prejudice and false prestige.	It identifies satire.

MCP

*For every paragraph, remember MCP:
Moustache, Class, Power.*

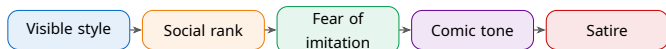
11 Scene-wise Revision Notes

This section helps students move from plot memory to answer writing. Each scene should be revised as an event, a class signal and a satirical comment.

11.1 Opening classification of moustaches

The opening works like a comic social chart. The narrator lists moustaches as if they were official badges of caste, class and public importance.

Scene detail	What it shows	Answer use
Lion and tiger styles	High rank claims special symbols.	Use for hierarchy.
Goat style	New money tries to find a place.	Use for Ramanand.
Sheep and mouse styles	Lower groups are pushed down.	Use for social criticism.
Mock-serious narration	Absurd rules are treated as serious.	Use for satire.

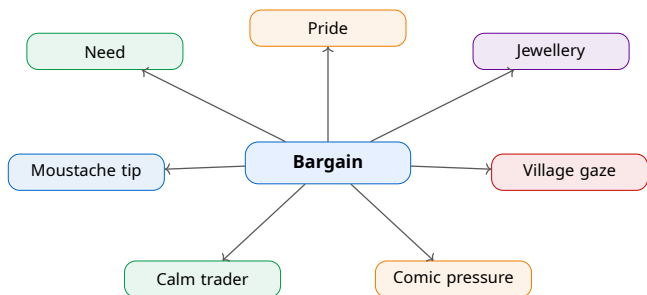


11.2 Shop bargaining scenes

The shop scenes show Ramanand's method. He never fights Khan directly when trade is useful. He waits, measures Khan's need and asks for another pledge.

Moment	Khan's aim	Ramanand's response
Nose-ring visit	Make one tip come down.	Lowers one tip and completes business.
Second tip dispute	Demand full symbolic obedience.	Delays and asks for more value.
Necklace pledge	Protect noble honour.	Turns honour into another transaction.
Public witnesses	Seek social support.	Village accepts the bargain logic.

Shop scene web

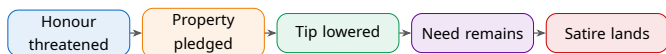


11.3 Ending and final interpretation

The ending should be read as social irony. Khan wins the outward point for a moment, but Ramanand wins the larger struggle because he controls money, timing and need.

- The moustache tip can be lowered, but Khan's dependence remains.
- The necklace pledge shows the cost of protecting empty prestige.
- Ramanand's calm manner is more powerful than Khan's loud anger.
- Anand makes the reader laugh at the quarrel and then notice the social cruelty behind it.
- The final interpretation should mention class, symbol and economic power together.

Ending logic



12 Quick Reference Summary

Use this section for last-minute revision. It gathers the full chapter into short, exam-ready blocks.

12.1 One-page summary

- Mulk Raj Anand presents a society where moustache styles signal class rank.
- Seth Ramanand twists his goat moustache until it almost looks like a tiger moustache.
- Khan Azam Khan treats this as an insult to his noble honour.
- Ramanand lowers the tips only when Khan pledges more valuables.
- The story satirises empty prestige, class prejudice and the rise of commercial power.

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12.2 Fast revision table

Need	Best point	Best scene
Plot	A status symbol causes repeated bargaining.	Ramanand's shop.
Character	Khan is proud but economically weak.	Nose-ring and necklace pledges.
Theme	Class rank depends on fragile signs.	Goat moustache copied as tiger style.
Symbol	Moustache as public class marker.	Opening classification.
Satire	A tiny tip becomes social crisis.	Villagers watch the quarrel.

Final check

Before submitting an answer, ask whether each paragraph links the moustache to class. If not, add that link.

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