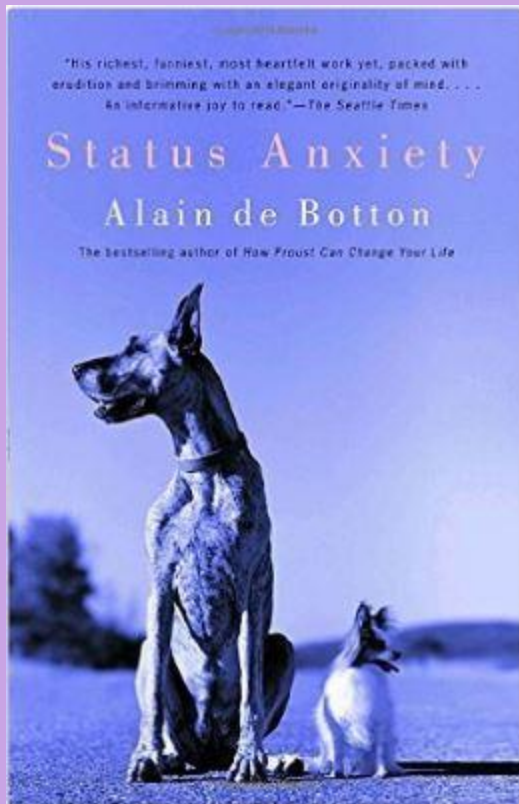


Anyone who's ever lost sleep over an unreturned phone call or the neighbor's Lexus had better read Alain de Botton's irresistibly



clear-headed new book, immediately. For in its pages, a master explicator of our civilization and its discontents turns his attention to the insatiable quest for status, a quest that has less to do with material comfort than with love. To demonstrate his thesis, de Botton ranges through Western history and thought from St. Augustine to Andrew Carnegie and Machiavelli to Anthony Robbins.

Whether it's assessing the class-consciousness of Christianity or the convulsions of consumer capitalism, dueling or home-furnishing, Status

Anxiety is infallibly entertaining. And when it examines the virtues of informed misanthropy, art appreciation, or walking a lobster on a leash, it is not only wise but helpful.