



# Who Wants to Be a Billionaire?: The James Packer Story

*Paul Barry*

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*Who Wants to Be a Billionaire?* is the story of James Packer's desperate battle to win his father's love and respect. It's also a tale of billion-dollar bets gone disastrously wrong. But above all it's the portrait of a troubled relationship between a dominant father and dutiful son. In this powerful sequel to his number one bestseller, *The Rise and Rise of Kerry Packer*, Paul Barry shows how James's father kept his grip on the empire even as he lay close to death. And he reveals what drives his heir. As a child James was derided by Kerry as too soft, too close to his mother, or simply "a loser." Since then he has struggled to make his father proud—in the only way the Packers know—by making money. Having seen Kerry lose hundreds of millions in the world's casinos, James chose to bet billions of dollars on buying them instead. Then came the global financial crisis and he almost lost the lot. As markets hit rock bottom in early 2009, Australia's richest man was \$4 billion poorer and no longer on top of the heap. He was smoking again, putting on weight, and shutting himself off from friends. Years earlier, far smaller losses in One. Tel had pushed him to the brink of a nervous breakdown and made him seek salvation in Scientology. Can James survive this time? Will he bounce back? Or was his father right?

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