HOLDIN' KINGS

~~From the included video, you should be able to deduce absolutely everything about the game.~~

Sorry, somebody recorded over it. But the written transcript below should at least tell you enough to give you the answer.

Wenceslas: That's right, let's each sit on one side of this square table. Okay, so the game we're going to play is called Bohemian Hold 'Em. I deal each of you three fellows one card face up, starting at my right …

Balthazar: And going around *counterclockwise*? That's unusual.

Melchior: Cool — I've got the high card!

Wenceslas: And then I deal a face-up card to each of the four of us, again starting at my right and going counterclockwise. So each of you now has two, and I've got one.

Caspar: At least my second card's higher than my first. Same for you, Balthazar.

Melchior: My second card's not as high as my first, but it's still higher than any other card at the table!

Wenceslas: Let me just write down all the values (but not the suits) of the cards that I've dealt, in the order I dealt them, left to right, on this piece of paper.

Balthazar: Thanks for writing each player's card values oriented so he, specifically, can read them.

Wenceslas: No problem — you're guests! Anyway, we keep these cards as our hands *for the rest of the game.* The game consists of nine rounds. In each round, I deal three face up cards into the center of the table — those cards are called the "flop" — and you each get to wager zero or more gold coins against me. Then I deal two more face-up cards into the center, and each of us makes the best five-card poker hand possible from his hand and the cards in the center. I pay out to those who beat me, and collect from those whom I beat.

Caspar: So this is a weird, simplified variant of Texas Hold 'Em?

Wenceslas: I guess, but Texas hasn't been invented yet, so let's stick with this.

Balthazar: But aren't you at a tremendous disadvantage? You've only got one card — whose value is exactly halfway between the values of my cards, by the way — so you've got less opportunity to make a good hand.

Wenceslas: True, but as I said, you're guests. Anyway, here's the first flop: K♣, K♦, K♥. How appropriate! Bets? [Clinking ensues.] And the last two cards … ah, looks like I win everything. Second flop: Q♣, Q♦, Q♥. Bets? [Clinking.] Last two cards … I win everything. Third flop: J♣, J♦, J♥. Bets? [Clinking.] Last two … wow, I win everything again.

Melchior: I'm sitting right across from you, and I can't see how you're doing this. Three times in a row we've all got just three of a kind after the flop, and then after the last two cards you win!

Wenceslas: Luck of the draw, Mel, luck of the draw. Fourth flop: 3♥, 6♦, 10♣. [Clinking.] Last two … I win everything! Fifth flop: 4♣, 7♥, A♦. [Clinking.] Last two … I win everything! Sixth flop: 4♦, 7♣, A♥. [Clinking.] Last two …

Balthazar: You win everything. After each of those last three flops, I had one pair, and Mel here to my left had one pair, and you had nothing; then with two more cards, we *still* each had just one pair, and you grabbed all the gold.

Caspar: In contrast, I haven't finished any round *yet* with exactly one pair.

Wenceslas: Well, let's finish it up. Seventh flop: 4♠, 10♦, K♠. [Hesitant clinking.] Last two … I win everything! Eighth flop: 7♠, Q♠, A♠. [Very hesitant clinking.] Last two …

Caspar: You win everything. And since there are only five cards left in the deck, and we know you're going to win again, I don't see much point …

Wenceslas: Ninth flop: 3♠, 10♠, J♠. [No clinking.] No surprise. Last two cards anyway … and yeah, I have the best poker hand again. Well, that was fun — gotta run! [Sound of footsteps and slamming door.]

Balthazar: Great. We've got so little gold left, we're gonna have to regift that myrrh and frankincense my mom gave us … Mel, why are you staring at that piece of paper?

Melchior: It's got the answer to a BAPHL puzzle on it.

Caspar: Wow. He *is* good.