“His Heart’s Desire” Lesson Plan: 9-12th Grade ELA

**Estimated Time/Length of Lesson:** 50 Minutes

**Subject/Class Period:** 9-12th Grade ELA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central Focus of Lesson:</th>
<th>“His Heart’s Desire” by Alice Dunbar Nelson</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essential/Compelling Question(s):</td>
<td>What is expected out of boys? Especially boys of color?</td>
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<tr>
<th>Content Standards (Full text of the standard and/or theme is required):</th>
<th>PAS Standards:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CC.1.3.9–10.A Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CC.1.3.9–10.B Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences and conclusions based on an author’s explicit assumptions and beliefs about a subject.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CC.1.3.9–10.C Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.</td>
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**Disciplinary Standards (NCSS, NCTM, NCTE, NGSS, ACTFL)**

S1. Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

S3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features.

S11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

S12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes.
### Learning Objectives:
Students will be able to discuss themes, character traits, and conflicts within short stories.

### Assessments:
- Informal formative: discussions on various themes of the short story
- Informal formative: discussions on how the various themes of the short story are still prevalent in the contemporary world.

### Teaching Models
- Direct Instruction  
- Cooperative Learning  
- Discussion  
- Inquiry

### Grouping
- Whole group  
- Small group  
- Flexible  
- Pairs  
- Other (describe):  

### Academic Language
*Masculinity, gender norms, desire, dignity*

### Instructional Strategies and Learning Tasks

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<tr>
<th>Anticipatory Set/Introduction</th>
<th>General Instruction Needs</th>
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<td>10 minutes: Introductory questions:</td>
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| Option 1) How does desire shape how we live our lives?  
| Option 2) What is expected out of boys and girls? What are boys accustomed to do? What are they not accustomed to do? What are girls accustomed to do? What are they not accustomed to do? |  

### Diversity and Individualized Needs
| Body of the Lesson | 5 minutes: Provide students with a brief biography of Alice Dunbar Nelson and background for “His Heart’s Desire” and The Annals of 'Steenth Street via [https://www.taughtbyliterature.org/thesteenthstreetstories-taughtbyliterature](https://www.taughtbyliterature.org/thesteenthstreetstories-taughtbyliterature)

13 minutes: Listen to audio recording of “His Heart’s Desire” via [https://www.taughtbyliterature.org/his-hearts-desire-story](https://www.taughtbyliterature.org/his-hearts-desire-story) with students reading the text alongside

5-7 minutes: Have students break out into three groups and have each group answer one of the questions: What do you notice or wonder about Andy’s character in the story? What kind of relationship does Andy have with his sister? What kind of relationship does Andy have with his mother and how does her reluctance to send her to school affect his character?

5-7 minutes: Discuss answers as a group. | Provision of both the audio and the digital/printed out version of the text |

| Closure: | Closing Question: How does Andy subvert gender norms? Does Andy’s race add extra subversion? How would Andy’s desire for a doll be looked at now, over a century after the story was written? |