"Much Ado About Nothing" Reading Questions

ACT 1 - SCENE 1
1. Describe Beatrice (at least 3 things about her).

2. Describe Benedick (at least 3 things about him).

3. Describe the “war” between Beatrice and Benedick - how much do they really hate each other?

4. What does Don Pedro promise to do for his friend, Claudius? Why (think about customs)?

SCENE 2
1. Describe Leonato and Antonio (at least 3 things about them).

2. What are they gossiping about?

3. Describe Hero (at least 3 things about her).

SCENE 3
1. What is Don John’s problem? What does he mean when he says he refuses to “sing in my cage”?

2. What characteristic does John admit about himself?

3. John’s follower (and coconspirator in plans against Claudio and Hero) is Borachio, and Borachio means “wine bottle” or “drunkard.” What term is this - a familiar device?
ACT 2 - SCENE 1
1. In the conversations between Beatrice and Benedick, why does Benedick put on a mask, and does Beatrice know it is Benedick?

2. In the conversation between John and Claudio, what does John insinuate? Why does Claudio believe him?

3. What is the outcome of John’s first scheme - how does Claudio learn the truth?

4. In the conversation between Pedro and Beatrice, what do they say to each other, and what does this tell you about each character (personality)?

SCENE 2
1. What is Don John’s new scheme?

2. Why is this such a clever and evil scheme (think about social customs/expectations)?

3. Opinion: Do you think this scheme will go John’s way? Explain why or why not.

SCENE 3: Rewatch this scene and then answer the following questions (** = refer to movie)
**1. Compare Balthasar’s song to the Emma Thompson’s version in the beginning of the movie

2. How do Pedro, Leonato, and Claudio decide to trick Benedick?

**3. Look at lines 100-105. You may not have found this funny as you read, but you probably did as you watched the movie. How is this section an example of visual humor (vs. textual).

4. Why does Benedick fall for the trick?

5. What 3 traits does Benedick demand of a prospective wife? Who among his company exhibits these?
ACT 3 - SCENE 1
1. How do Hero and Ursula trick Beatrice?

2. What conflict is proclaimed of the two of them (the reason for not expressing their love)?

3. What wisdom is expressed about their hatred of love?

SCENE 2
1. Why do Pedro, Claudio, and Leonato mock Benedick?

2. How does John “save Claudio’s honor,” and what does Claudio decide to do?

3. How is this a “fool me once/fool me twice” situation? Would YOU believe John again?

SCENE 3
1. What is “comic relief,” and who is the comic relief in this scene?

2. What do Dogberry’s watchmen overhear?

3. How does this scene prove that this is a comedy? How would this scene end in a tragedy?

SCENE 4
1. What “sickness” does Beatrice admit as she help Hero prepare for the wedding?

2. Based on Margaret’s behavior in this scene, do you think she ruined Hero’s reputation on purpose?

3. Margaret is also comic relief. She is a lot like a character in Romeo & Juliet. Whom does she resemble?

SCENE 5
1. How could this scene drastically change the rest of the play?

2. Why does the wedding go on as planned?
ACT 4 - SCENE 1
1. What does Claudio do at the wedding? Why is the setting essential?

2. How does Leonato react? How should he have reacted? (Gender values!)

3. How does the friar react? He does not blame anyone but says the situation must be an _____.

4. How does Benedick react? Whom does he blame, and why?

5. What is the Friar’s plan to clear up this ugly situation? Why does he think this will work?

6. Describe the conversation between Benedick and Beatrice. What do they tell one another? Why is this terrible timing? What does Beatrice ask Benedick to do, and what is his response?

SCENE 2
1. Who makes Borachio and Conrade tell the truth about Don John (not Dogberry)?

2. What are Borachio and Conrade made to believe about Hero? Where is John?
ACT 5 - SCENE 1
1. What happens when Leonato and Antonio accost Pedro and Claudio? (Put the conversation in your own words)

2. When Benedick shows up, Pedro says, “Comfort us with your wit,” and Benedick responds, “It is in my scabbard.” What does this mean? Describe the situation.

3. When Pedro and Claudio hear the truth about John and the “death” of Hero, what does Borachio wish of them? What does Leonato say to them (sarcastic)?

4. Pedro and Claudio admit their mistake and accept any penance. What does Leonato ask of Claudio (2 things)? *The text is unclear in this conversation, but the movie makes the connection for you*

5. What final claim does Borachio make (about Margaret)?

SCENE 2
1. Benedick tries to write poetry for Beatrice (typical courtship). Why do you think he is failing so miserably at it when he is such a witty person?

2. Benedick says to Beatrice, “Thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably” - what does he mean?

SCENE 3
1. What is an epitaph (look in your literary terms packet)?

2. Describe Claudio’s epitaph for Hero.

3. What promise does Claudio make at Hero’s grave?
SCENE 4
1. What do the characters say about the end of this mess?
   - Friar (to those who doubted him/Hero):
   - Leonato (of Pedro, Claudio, and Margaret):
   - Antonio (of the whole situation):
   - Benedick (of his duel with Claudio):

2. When Benedick asks for Leonato’s approval, what does Leonato try to do before blessing the match?

3. Describe the trick wedding - what happens and the purposes (2) it serves.

4. What does Hero say about all this when finally given the chance? What part of Hero has died, and what part lives? Explain the metaphor!

5. The trick played on Benedick and Beatrice is finally revealed. Describe the sequence.

6. What does Benedick suggest Pedro do about the captured John? Is this an appropriate ending?