

# Long Live the Queen

For the first time, Medieval Times has  
a queen as master of ceremonies

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It's good to be the queen. • It's especially good when you're a first queen. Elizabeth I, for instance. Or Mary I. Or even Queen Doña Maria Isabella — the first female monarch in the 34-year history of Medieval Times, who will be taking the throne on Thursday. • "I'm very, very excited to be playing her. She's a really rich character," says Jessica Schear-Tolles of Rutherford, one of six actors who have been tapped to play the character at the 28-year-old Lyndhurst venue. • A damsel, yes, but never a damsel in distress, Schear-Tolles says.

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Above, Leigh Cornder, Medieval Times writer and director, says casting a female knight — a process that would involve finding four talented horsewomen with stage-combat experience in each of the nine Medieval Times locations — is not in the chain's immediate future. Right, Jessica Schear-Tolles of Rutherford, who is one of a half dozen queens, rehearses for her big debut in Lyndhurst. PHOTOS BY MITSU YASUKAWA/NORTHJERSEY.COM