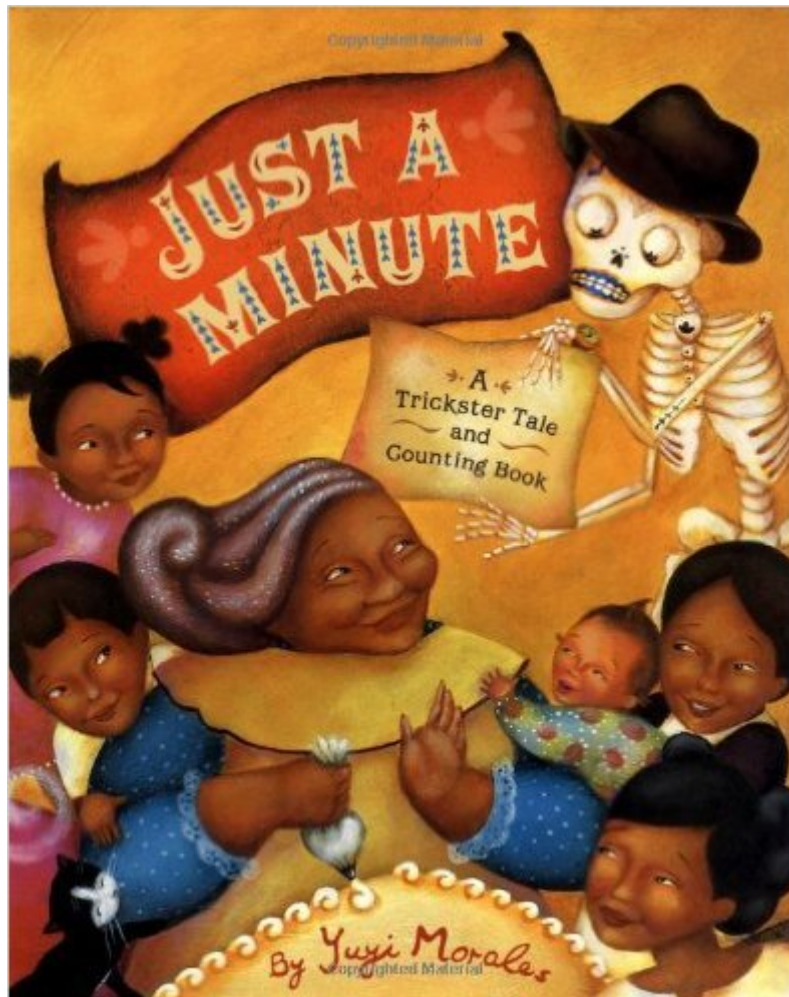


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# Just A Minute!: A Trickster Tale And Counting Book (Pura Belpre Medal Book Illustrator (Awards))



## Synopsis

In this original trickster tale, Senor Calavera arrives unexpectedly at Grandma Beetle's door. He requests that she leave with him right away. "Just a minute," Grandma Beetle tells him. She still has one house to sweep, two pots of tea to boil, three pounds of corn to make into tortillas -- and that's just the start! Using both Spanish and English words to tally the party preparations, Grandma Beetle cleverly delays her trip and spends her birthday with a table full of grandchildren and her surprise guest. This spirited tribute to the rich traditions of Mexican culture is the perfect introduction to counting in both English and Spanish. The vivacious illustrations and universal depiction of a family celebration are sure to be adored by young readers everywhere.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 540L (What's this?)

Series: Pura Belpre Medal Book Illustrator (Awards)

Hardcover: 36 pages

Publisher: Chronicle Books; Library Binding edition (September 1, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0811837580

ISBN-13: 978-0811837583

Product Dimensions: 9.1 x 0.4 x 11 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (36 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #211,485 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #47 in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Mexico](#) #210 in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > Hispanic & Latino](#) #250 in [Books > Children's Books > Fairy Tales, Folk Tales & Myths > Multicultural](#)

Age Range: 5 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 7

## Customer Reviews

Yuyi Morales is having a great year. After creating a series of deft and meaningful illustrations for Kathleen Krull's heartfelt Cesar Chavez picture book, "Harvesting Hope", she wrote and illustrated a second 2003 Pura Belpre winner. "Just a Minute" is both a trickster tale and a basic counting story. Taking the dark conceit of outwitting death through meticulous partying, the story is a delightful dance with the macabre. It is Grandma Beetle's birthday, and a most unexpected guest is at the

door. Standing as nice as you please is Senor Galavera. The handsome skeleton informs the older woman that it is just about time for her to go away with him. Grandma Beetle delays him, asking to have time to sweep her ONE house. Then she has TWO pots of tea to boil. Next, it's THREE pounds of corn to make into tortillas. As more and more time goes by the previously patient Senor Galavera becomes more and more impatient. Finally, it's party time and the finicky skeleton finds that he's had so much fun that he'll be sure to come back for Grandma Beetle's birthday at the same time next year. Who can resist the idea of outwitting Death himself through a simple counting game? Better still, for every English number pronounced there's a Spanish one for easy translation. But as fine an author as Ms. Morales is, she's an even better illustrator. First of all, Senor Galavera is a fabulous site. Anyone familiar with a skeleton from the Day of the Dead will appreciate his appearance. Sporting a jaunty fedora and a delicately detailed body, he's really quite attractive. His mouth is a series of blue and orange alternating stripes. His eyes are the stars of the anise seed. Better yet, along his vertebrae, forearms, forehead, and kneecaps are tiny intricate details. Grandma Beetle is more than a match for this supposedly dire apparition. She's even able to coerce him into donning an apron (falling loosely on his bony hips) and mixing some pots of delicious food. Kids reading through this book several times will enjoy locating the sly kitten that follows our two heroes about from page to page. To my mind, the best part of these pictures is their luminosity. They pulsate with the deep blues, greens, reds, and other shades that line the pages. "Just a Minute" has rapidly become my number one favorite illustrated picture book of the year 2003 (outside of my beloved "Diary of a Wombat" that is). A book that intrigues, teaches, and is filled with a deep emotional warmth such as this book has is a rare find. Be sure to read it and then share it with everyone you know.

Senor Calavera has come to fetch Grandma Beetle, and she's ready to go, only she has a few small chores to do, if he'd be so kind to wait as she counts them off. I'm not normally very impressed with counting books or multi-language books, as it can be hard to teach something and maintain a good story. Morales has sought to teach two separate things in this book--counting and a little bit of Spanish--and has done so with commendable skill. Story quality has not been sacrificed in any way, leaving readers with an educational book which is also entertaining. The artwork is interesting, with the humans given very round, almost cartoonish faces, but alongside very detailed eyes. Not so much as to be unsettling, but enough to create a definite unique style. There's also a definite stylistic influence from Mexican culture in the artwork. A must for public libraries, but give it a check out from there before buying for a private home. They'll only need to learn to count to ten for so

long, so might as well go for more long-term books.

I found this children's book to have a very grown up meaning dealing with death. Senor Calavara has come to take Grandma Beetle into the afterlife when he knocks on her door. However, Grandma Beetle has some tricks up her sleeves for Senor Calavara. Grandma Beetle is clever as she make Senor Calavara wait "just a minute" until she reaches all ten of her daily chores and is ready to go. The pictures show the chores Grandma Beetle had to do before she was ready to go and just how impatient Senor Calavara was getting with each chore. I enjoyed the bright colors used in the pictures throughout the book. I also liked seeing the numbers in English and in Spanish to show the children how the numbers go together in sequence. This book was a good read and it kept you wondering what Grandma Beetle had to do next.

Terrific fun for me and my four-year old. This book is funny, sweet and packed with lush illustrations. I can't wait to see more from Yuyi Morales. Her most recent illustration work, that I know of, is Sherman Alexie's *Thunderboy, Jr.*, another fantastic book, but I still hope to see more from Ms. Morales!

The author has done a phenomenal job with this funny trickster tale and also with the colorful bright illustrations. This tale engrained in the rich traditions of Mexican culture brings a story of a grandma, who outwits her death with her busy life. She has one house to sweep, two pots of tea to boil, three pounds of corn to make into tortillas, and more. The counting up to ten is in English and Spanish. It is written in a very enjoyable language and should be easily understandable for the young audience.

It doesn't matter which language you speak, you'll enjoy this hilarious trickster tale. Grandma Beetle tricks and annoys the strange skeleton, Senor Calavera, by saying, "Just a minute!" over and over again. The skeleton, who never speaks, may have been there to take her life. Each time she delays Senor Calavera, something funny and interesting happens. The sly look in Grandma Beetle's eyes lets you know that she is tricking Senor Calavera. Recommended for people of all ages, but use carefully with young children who may be afraid of skeletons.

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