In this original trickster tale, Senor Calavera arrives unexpectedly at Grandma Beetles 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 thats 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.

Features:
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My Personal Review:
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 Beetles 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 vertebrate, 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.

For More 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price:
Just a Minute!: A Trickster Tale and Counting Book (Pura Belpre Medal Book Illustrator (Awards)) by Yuyi Morales - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!