

In defence of words: Erik Orsenna, *La Grammaire est une chanson douce* (*Grammar is a Gentle Song*)

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Abstract. *La Grammaire est une chanson douce* (*Grammar is a Gentle Song*), by Erik Orsenna, is a book seemingly intended for children; however, the text acquires a very strong metalinguistic dimension through the often allusive language, the use of interrupted statements, appreciative elements, pejorative meanings, and a subtle irony. In this article, I have tried to highlight the techniques that form part of the linguistic arsenal used by the author to make his discourse more authentic and to connect with his reader, to whom he constantly gives a knowing wink. Thus, the book becomes a blend of humour, whimsy, and wit, which sometimes takes on the tone of a profound meditation on the fate of languages, especially in current events. To achieve this, he employs a wide range of fictional strategies as well as linguistic resources, approaching the linguistic domain from both serious and humorous perspectives. Through its blend of fantasy and reality, the book offers glimpses into his ideas, which convey a message that is both poetic and humanist.

Keywords: grammar, music, languages, words, linguistic signs, monolingualism, writer.