An Ending's Continuation

Let me make myself clear. This is my dream.
When I opened my eyes in the morning, this story disappeared like mist.
It's fine if you think I'm still daydreaming.

In short, this was a dream. Something that disappeared when I woke up.
Still, for the me in that dream, maybe my current real life was a dream for him.

In the dream, I came back home from work and met my daughter and my little sister who were playing in the living room.
My little sister's name is Kousaka Kirino. She was very active abroad.
She was a young model. Her hair was dyed a light brown and she was slender, with earrings and polished nails. As time passed, not only did she remain unchanged, but she also became even more charming.
During her time in middle school, I compared Ayase to an angel, but after she grew up, Kirino was like...
A goddess.
I didn't say that because of personal bias, but she was the second most beautiful girl in the world. That made me proud.

My prideful little sister was now waiting for me back home. Maybe that was my dream harem life.

"I'm home."

I spoke. Not only did she not reply, she didn't even look this way. Wearing her fashionable clothing, Kirino brought my daughter on her knee and patted her head with a satisfied smile.

They get along really well.

In short, this was a very heart warming scene.

I walked closer and listened to Kirino talking with my daughter.

"—And then, Shiori lived happily together with onii-chan. Congratulations, this is wonderful!"

Wait a second!

"Hey hey! You imouto over there, what are you telling my daughter!?"

I hastily asked, because somehow the name 'Shiori' sounded familiar. Kirino looked up "Ah, you are back."

"What do you mean, ah? You, are you…"

Still, I couldn't just say "You aren't playing that, right?"
"Isn't that a bad game for education?"
I quickly changed my words.
But unexpectedly, I didn't get an apology from my little sister, instead my daughter—'Wah, wah'—she started crying.
"Don't suddenly raise your voice like that. See, you made her cry."
I was scolded.
"I'm sorry."
"It's okay, it's okay, it's okay. Good girl, good girl. Your dad is so scary...oh...mommy will give you some sweets later, now stop crying."
Kirino pinched my daughter's nose, she was so good at coaxing children. She totally looked like a mother now.
My little sister glanced at me, and asked "What?"
"Ah...just now...what was that game?"
"Ah? This? This is a new game that was released yesterday."
My little sister pulled her PSP out and kept playing. It didn't look like an eroge or anything.
"Ha...it's the same as if you didn't answer my question."
...Why was I thinking like Ayase?
Was that how parents thought?
"Still, in this aspect, you haven't changed at all."
"Ah, what?"
"You always preferred laying down in one place."

Even in her twenties, Kirino was still my little sister. Yes—my little sister, little sister! Everyday she spent in enjoyment like that.

The last few years since my daughter was born, because Kirino didn't have work overseas, she stayed at my parents' house. Every day off, she spent the whole day in the living room, playing with my daughter, watching Meruru reruns and remakes with her. Passing every day in a moe-moe manner.

"Is that like a hikikomori?"

"So what? I don't care."

That brilliant smile and the way she spoke. It was the same as when she was in her second year of middle school.

I gave a final greeting to Kirino and moved toward the kitchen. There, my wife greeted me.

"Welcome home, darling."

"I'm home."

An exchange just like a newlywed couple, I felt my face getting hot. We had been married for so long, yet I couldn't get used to this. So unbelievable.

"Tonight's dinner—I tried harder than usual."

"Alright. Say, is there anything worth celebrating today?"

My wife showed me a gentle smile:

"Heehee, of course there is."
I thought about it for a second…
"Could it be—a second one?"
My wife blushed and hit me: "That's not it."
"Ah, I see. What a pity."
"Um—" My wife puffed her cheeks and glanced at me. I gently put my hand on her head.
"Sorry, I'm waiting for dinner."
I gently patted my wife and opened the refrigerator.
I poured myself a cup of barley tea and met my mother's eyes.
"You are back?"
"I'm back."
"Kyou suke, did you see your father on the way?"
"Nope, where did he go?"
"He went to the toy store. Just now 'princess' wanted some dolls, so he ran outside. He said he was going to buy it immediately."
"...Ahahaha."
Although my father was tired, he spoiled his granddaughter. I couldn't see the strict father anymore.
"It's not good to spoil kids too much. Although it's not a problem now, it's not good for future education."
"Sorry." Mom smiled wryly.
A good smell drifted out from inside the pot.

"It smells nice. I'm starting to feel hungry."

"Alright alright. Let's wait for your father to return before eating."

Mom moved her hand to her face, and whispered to me without letting my wife hear:

"Anyway—Kyousuke, you really married such a good wife!"

"Ah? What are you saying?"

"Since my daughter-in-law came here, both you and your father seem to be enjoying her food. It makes me feel a lack of confidence."

"Haha, to tell you the truth, I didn't know that she was so good at cooking when I married her."

"You really are an idiot!"

"What?"

"She is clearly practicing. She received special training from Manami in order to prepare for this day!"

"Ah..."

Maybe it was true. Because she clearly tried very hard.

"When I introduced her to everyone, I still didn't know how it would turn out."

"Yes, your father almost fell down. I was shocked too. We had our doubts 'is that girl okay?'"

You are so direct...
"Okay..."

"Yes. If you recorded her back then and compared it to now, no one would think that they were the same person."

"Haha, you are right."

"Um—what are you talking about?"

Noticing that I was chatting with my mother, my wife ran over like a little animal.

"I'm telling her how much I love you."

I should say it honestly—

"Ah——"

My wife blushed and stiffly looked to the side, then just like a video playing in reverse, she quickly moved back to her previous position.

"Call me Mommy. Do you understand? Try saying both Kirino-onee-chan and Mommy."

"Yes, auntie!"

"Ack—no, not aunt. Mommy. Call me Mommy."

"Yes, auntie!"

"Ack—damn! Teaching a kid something in reality is soooooooo hard."

When I got back to the living room, I found out that Kirino was teaching my daughter something bad.
I sighed, and asked her:

"What are you doing?"

"Trying to teach my cute niece to call me Mommy."

"Stop immediately."

"What? Why?"

"A while ago, when I, my wife, my daughter and you went outside to buy stuff, she called you mommy, right?"

"Yes. She was so cute back then."

"The old manager lady shot me a fierce glare, as if saying 'what kind of relationship do they have?'. What would you do if it caused some weird rumors?"

"Can't you just say that we are brother and sister?"

"How could I explain my daughter calling my little sister mommy!?!"

"Ah? Mommy is mommy."

Just like before, sometimes we were totally unable to speak with each other.

At that time, my daughter pulled on Kirino's head and said:

"Auntie, I'm hungry."

"Wait a bit more ~ when your grandpa gets back, we will eat right away."

"Okay—grandpa is so slow."

"Yes, slow. Say, do you want to play with Meruru's figure together
with Mommy after dinner?"

"Yes!"

Recently, Meruru had a great come back, it was airing on TV again.

"Make sure to call me Kirino-nee-chan or Mommy, alright?"

"Yes, auntie!"

"Ah—really."

I had a strange feeling, like my daughter got along with Kirino better than her mother.

I sat down in front of them. Kirino looked at me with pained eyes, tears almost breaking out.

"Say, why won't she call me Mommy again? She called me it before."

"After that incident, I carefully taught her to remember your image as 'this is auntie.' A few tries later, she didn't make that mistake anymore."

"Why did you have to do that? I'm only in my twenties. Years of youth."

"For a child, you are still her auntie."

"Ugh—"

"Say, if you like kids that much, why don't you get married? It should be easy for you to get a boyfriend, right?"

"Ha? It would become an obstacle to my work later."

"It's not like I don't understand your point. But recently, you have no
work at all. You spend all of your time playing at home."

She was like a legendary hikikomori.

If I told the middle school girl Kirino that in the future, she would become a hikikomori, I wondered what kind of treatment I would receive.

"That's unimportant. By the way, isn't it lonely without me around? Are you going to deny it? You even came to America because of me."

"That was..."

So many years ago...

"And later..."

"Don't tell me..."

I got a bad, a very bad feeling. I didn't know what Kirino was about to say, but I could guess what it was about.

Back then, we were—how could I put it, we were still young. We weren't mature enough to think far ahead. Every time I thought back to those day, I felt a bit of regret. My youth was full of noise, chaos, pain and happiness.

"Kirino."

"What?"

"About—yesterday, I had a dream. I dreamt back to the time you came back from America."

"Hm—as expected of a siscon!"
Kirino's expression...don't tell me...

"So nostalgic."

"Indeed it is."

"What are they doing?"

"I met Saori not long ago."

"Really?"

"She looked quite happy, 'it has been a while since our last meeting,' just like before."

"Ah—haha..."

Kirino laughed. A few minutes later, she stopped, sighed and said:

"Also...I often meet Ayase too."

"She is an office lady now, right?"

"Yes, yes, she is very beautiful. Want to see her picture?"

"Of course, I really really want to see."

"...Disgusting."

"Hey, hey..."

For me, Ayase was like my first love. If I closed my eyes, I remembered it, that terrifyingly, immensely lethal, terrible destructive power.

No. It was when we first met, her angelic smile.

Because of Kirino, those old, embarrassing stories had both sincere
feelings and persistence.  
How could I forget them?  
Saori, Ayase, Manami, the Akagi siblings, Ria, Bridget, the  
Mikagami siblings, the Game Research Club. All of my memories  
about them were still fresh in my mind. I felt happy because at least I  
could still see them again.  

"Kirino, how about we gather everyone together?"

"Are you serious?"

"I'm serious. Although everyone has their own work, let's give it a  
try."

"Just like a class reunion."

"Yes, it's like that."

"Hm, not bad. Are we going to book an Akihabara maid café? Or do  
you have something else in mind?"

"Let's decide that later."

At least, it was a good idea in Kirino's opinion. But since when  
could we hold a reunion meeting in a maid café? She wanted to  
experience that feeling again, didn't she? Although some people  
might have changed, everyone gathering together sounded nice.  

"If we have decided to do it, let's discuss it with Saori. We need to  
contact whoever has moved far away too. It might be difficult, but I  
bet Saori has a solution."

"You already decided to leave everything to Saori again?"
"Because..."

Because she was very reliable...

"Still, Saori would be angry if we don't ask her for help...although..."

Kirino looked aside, hesitating:

"What would she wear? She is in her twenties now, will she appear in her 'Bajeena' personality?"

"Haha, that would be fun."

"Not really though."

Kirino caressed my daughter’s head, gently combing her mother-like black hair.

"Itchy..."

"Sorry sorry. Ah, as expected of her daughter, their smile is the same."

"It is. Will she be as beautiful as her mother in the next ten years?"

"If their personality is the same..."

"Don't say something so scary!"

I was really worried. Her mother only calmed down after we got married. If...

While we were talking—

"Sorry to keep you waiting!"

My wife brought out dinner. Sashimi, potato stew and snapper fish head—quite a good meal. My daughter said 'So good!' and tried to
sniff it.

"This isn't bad. Tonight, Mommy made a special dinner, if you like anything Mommy will give it to you."

"Future education is going to be difficult..."

Don't spoil her too much, okay?

Kirino was surprised too, she asked:

"For real?"

Seeing that, my wife laughed wryly and brought rice to the dinner table.

At that time, there was some sound coming from the front door.

"I'm back! I have brought a doll back!"

The 'very fond of his granddaughter' grandpa came back.

"Then come and eat", mom said.

"Before that, can I ask the reason for this celebration?"

I smiled and looked at my wife.

"Congratulations on your promotion!" My wife smiled back.

"So you knew."

"Yes, I heard from the minister that next week is a long session."

"____"

"What happened?"

"It...it's nothing big"
I smiled wryly. Because this was all a dream, my memories of my life with my wife resurfaced easily.

"It really became what you said."

"What?" My wife sounded surprised.

"Back then, when you said, that kind of thing."

My wife understood what I meant, she slowly nodded.

And then...

"Ah, right. The first time we met, I thought that you were so plain and had no motivation, nothing special. How did it become like this?"

My wife returned to the first time we met and showed me a devil-like smile.

I gently caressed her head and enjoyed the loving feeling.

Sometimes, it was hard to say if something was real or not. Now, I didn't know if this feeling was a dream or real.

Middle school. High school. University. Working around, fateful encounter, wedding, having a daughter. I recalled every one of my memories.

In my dream last night, I was still in my youth.

Was the past me walking on the same route as me?

In my warm blanket, that was what I thought.