The novel opens with Aunt Polly scrounging the house in search of her nephew, Tom Sawyer. She finds him in the closet, discovers that his hands are covered with jam, and prepares to give him a whipping. Tom cries out theatrically, “Look behind you!” and when Aunt Polly turns, Tom escapes over the fence. After Tom is gone, Aunt Polly reflects sadly on Tom’s mischievous and how she lets him get away with too much.

Tom comes home at supper time. Aunt Polly tells him that he will be skipped school that afternoon and must be dressed and have his clothes put away. Tom is told to stay at home and help Aunt Polly with the household chores. Tom is not happy about this, but he understands the need for discipline. Aunt Polly is satisfied.

Tom goes out of the house, but is soon caught by the wind and rain. He is soaked to the bone and hardly knows where he is. Tom is happy to get back home, but Aunt Polly is not pleased with his wet appearance.

When he returns home in the evening, Tom finds Aunt Polly waiting for him. She notices his dirty clothes and resolve to make him work the next day, a Saturday, as punishment.

On Saturday morning, Aunt Polly sends Tom out to whitewash the fence. Tom tries to get away, but Aunt Polly is persistent. Tom agrees to do the whitewashing in return for a “white alley,” a kind of noose. Tom almost agrees, but Aunt Polly appears and chases him off, leaving Tom alone with his task.
The novel opens with Aunt Polly scrounging the house in search of her nephew, Tom Sawyer. She finds him in the closet, discovers that his hands are covered with jam, and prepares to give him a whipping. Tom cries out theatrically, “Look behind you!” and when Aunt Polly turns, Tom escapes over the fence. After Tom is gone, Aunt Polly reflects warmly on Tom’s mischief and how she lets him get away with too much.

Tom comes home at suppertime with a greenish-black bruise on his forehead and a sunburned neck. Aunt Polly asks him how he got hurt. Tom tells her that he had to be skipped school that afternoon and went out to the river to catch some fish. While wandering along the streets of St. Petersburg, he met a group of boys and eventually chased a newswoman all the way home.

When he returns home in the evening, Tom finds Aunt Polly waiting for him. She notices his dirtied clothes and resolves to make him work the next day, a Saturday, as punishment.

On Saturday morning, Aunt Polly sends Tom out to whitewash the fence. Joaquin Murry, and Tom tries to get him to do some of the whitewashing in return for a “white alley,” a kind of nod, but Aunt Polly appears and chases him off, leaving Tom alone with his trowel.