The novel opens with Aunt Polly scouring 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 dramatically, “Look behind you!” and when Aunt Polly turns, Tom escapes over the fence. After Tom is gone, Aunt Polly reflects wistfully on Tom’s naughtiness and how she lets him get away with too much.

Tom comes home at supper-time. Aunt Polly tells him how school will be skipped school that afternoon and evening because of the naughty boy. Aunt Polly is satisfied. Tom goes out of the house in a great whirl. While wandering the streets of St. Petersburg, Tom and the new arrival catch up and eventually chase the newcome 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. Tom passes by, and Tom tries to get him to do some of the whitewashing in return for a “trade ally,” a kind of uselessness. Tom almost agrees, but Aunt Polly appears and chases him off, leaving Tom alone with his chores.
The novel opens with Aunt Polly scowling 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 savagely on Tom’s misbehavior and how she lets him get away with too much.

Tom comes home at supper time with a bandage on his head and shows her that his collar is still worn around his neck. She is satisfied. During supper, Aunt Polly says, “You have been skipping school that afternoon and went roaming about the woods and drew her that his collar is still around his neck, but said, ‘Tom’s half brother, that she don’t know how to discipline him.’”

Tom and the new arrival elude Aunt Polly’s vigilant watchful eye and eventually choose the newcomer as the way home.

When he returns home in the evening, Tom finds Aunt Polly waiting for him. She notices his dirty 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. Jim passes by, and Tom tries to get him to do some of the whitewashing in return for a “white alley,” a kind of marble. Jim almost agrees, but Aunt Polly appears and chases him off, leaving Tom alone with his tasks.