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

Tom comes home at supper time. Aunt Polly is still talking about his adventures. During supper, Aunt I. tells Tom that he will be skipped school that afternoon and sent to bed and that his clothes are still on the line, but she will let Tom’s half-brother, Jack, take care of him. Tom’s half-brother is a bit of a whirling. While wandering the streets of St. Petersburg, he is ordered by the lawman to clean up the town and eventually chased the newcomers 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 whiterush the fence. Jim passes by, and Tom tries to get him to do some of the whiterushing in return for a “white alley,” a kind of extra pay. Jim almost agrees, but Aunt Polly appears and chases him off, leaving Tom alone with his task.
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 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 mischievousness and how she lets him get away with too much.

Tom comes home at supper with a red mark on his forehead and a disapproving look in her eye. She tells him that she heard about his adventure. During supper, Aunt Polly tells Tom that he must be locked in his room the next day. As she turns to leave the room, she says, "You may come down to the hall and have some pie and don't eat it all at once, for I have saved it for you."

She leaves and Tom goes out to the hall to eat his pie. When his aunt comes back, she finds him eating all the pie. She kicks him out of the house and sends him to bed. Tom is sad to leave the house and wonders where he will go.

Tom's half-brother, Joe Harper, comes to visit him. Tom is happy to see him and they decide to go out and have some fun. They go out and explore the town, enjoying the freedom and adventure.

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