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 ink, 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 mischief and how she lets him get away with too much.

Tom comes home at supper time. He has an appetite but no desire to eat, for he has just been whipped. He worries about his adventures. During supper, Aunt Polly tells him that he will be skipped school that afternoon and must redress his wrongs. Tom’s head droops, and she senses that his confidence is still awry. She enlists Tom’s half-brother, Sid, to pretend to be him that afternoon. Aunt Polly is satisfied.

Tom goes out of the house in Sid’s clothes, his face carefully powdered and painted. Tom and the new arrival enter the store, and Tom plays the part of Sid perfectly. Aunt Polly is pleased, and eventually chooses the new coat for the whole house.

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 muddle. Jim almost agree, but Aunt Polly appears and chases him off, leaving Tom alone with his chores.
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 wistfully on Tom’s mischief and how she lets him get away with too much.

Tom comes home at supper with a black eye and a face all cut and bruised. He has been chased by bullies who have been skipping school that afternoon and have witnessed the murder of the oleaginous local storekeeper. Aunt Polly is satisfied, and Tom treats the whole decoy affair as a tremendous adventure. Tom’s half-brother Sid catches himself in the reflection of the mirror and eventually chases the newcomer 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 “white alley,” a kind of mustard. He almost agrees, but Aunt Polly appears and chases him off, leaving Tom alone with his tasks.