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 wistfully on Tom’s misdeeds and how she lets him get away with too much.

Tom comes home at supper time. He has told his mother he had been skipping school that day. He has been out with his friends, and they rented a kite and hauled it in a boat. They were so busy catching crabs that they lost the kite. The kite landed on the roof of the schoolhouse. Tom was very sorry about it, but he said he had been very busy. Aunt Polly is satisfied.

Tom goes out of the house and watches the street. The night is clear and bright, and the stars are visible in the sky. He hears a distant whistle. While wandering about, Tom sees a man walking down the street. Tom watches the man for a few minutes, then runs off to get his kite. When he returns, he 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 teases to get him to do some of the whitewashing in return for a “white alley,” a kind of marble. 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 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. His father, the well-known butler, has just arrived. Aunt Polly orders Tom to be whipped. Tom is due to be skipped school that afternoon and late evening to compensate for his mischief. It turns out that Tom has been skipping school all week. Aunt Polly is satisfied. Tom is told to sit down and eat his supper. Tom’s half-brother, Benji, is already in bed and turns over his nightcap.

Tom paces back and forth, sulking. Tom’s father, Mr. Mark, has armed the boy with a codebook, and Tom is due to be punished for his mischief. Tom’s Uncle Benji, a local schoolteacher, is in the room, and Tom’s father, Mr. Mark, is in the room, and Tom is due to be punished for his mischief. Tom’s father, Mr. Mark, is a local schoolteacher, and Tom’s father, Mr. Mark, is in the room, and Tom is due to be punished for his mischief.

When Tom 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 nectarine. Tom almost agrees, but Aunt Polly appears and chases him off, leaving Tom alone with his toiletries.