“Some houses are born bad,” Dr. John Montague, played by junior Michael Schley, said to Eleanor, who was played by senior Tristan Coker. The audience could feel the eerie presence from the words. The fall show wasn’t the normal comedic, witty fall show that North students were used to seeing, but a more frightening play.

Shannon Wray

Story: Fall Show

Final Draft

A year before the fall show during the 2013-2014 school year, director Chris Palmer scrambled through hundreds of plays for several months.

“I stumbled upon *The Haunting of Hill House...* and I jumped on it,” Palmer said. “I read [the play] and started imagining it in the Little Theatre.”
 The Haunting of Hill House took place in a supposedly haunted 80-year-old mansion. Dr. John Montague, a supernatural investigator, invited several guests to stay at the mansion because of their past experience with the paranormal. The four guests built friendships throughout their stay at the mansion, but also experienced events that made them question their sanity and well-being.

“I had done comedies the last two years and that is what I had fallen in routine of,” Palmer said. “I knew I wanted to do something a little more serious.”

Changing from a comedic to a more serious themed play was a new adjustment that Palmer and the cast and crew were ready to tackle.

Another difference was having a mainstage play take place in the Little Theatre rather than the Auditorium. Junior MyKia Carrell, lights crewmember, learned how to adjust from working in a big theater to a little theater.

“The Little Theatre is obviously smaller, so it is harder to move around,” Carrell said, “but we learned to work through it to create a great show.”

Transitioning from the auditorium to the little theater wasn’t the only switch that the cast and crew experienced.

During auditions, Palmer looked for students who could be serious and display fear.

“Usually in comedy, I am looking for kids who have a good sense of comedic timing,” Palmer said. “In [The Haunting of Hill House], it was very different. I was looking for kids who can be serious, [and] show me what it is actually like to be scared.”

One student that Palmer had an eye on was sophomore Dolan McNabb. When McNabb auditioned for *Hill House* and got the part as Luke Sanderson, he had to step out of his comfort zone, but that experience made him a better actor.

“It opened doors for me,” McNabb said, “because Luke, my character, was the first person I played who had a lot of emotions. I have developed the ability to become a character because before I was playing roles with little lines.”

McNabb also connected to his character through the Twitter accounts created by the cast, where each cast member posted as their character.

“Although [the accounts] were for advertising the play, it helped the cast connect to their characters,” McNabb said. “We built a better connection with our characters by having to say things that [we thought] our character would say outside of the script.”
 This connection extended not only to their characters, but to the rest of the cast, crew and directors as well.

 “There are so many good people,” McNabb said. “Not only good as in their personality, but they’re open to try new things and accept new people. They are very welcoming. I have made some of my best friendships and longest lasting friendships throughout the drama department.”