Foils in King Lear

King Lear
- King of England, values appearances above reality.
- Doesn't want to fulfill a king's obligations of governing for the good of his subjects, but wishes to retain the privileges and treatment of a king.
- Selfish and harsh/hasty to react, "nothing comes from nothing," as his response to Cordelia's profession of "bonded love" for her father, inferior to the grandiloquent professions of her sisters.
- Blind to the truth—impaired with "blinlets" characteristic of the Renaissance Christian Humanist—values the fawning of Goneril and Regan.
- Does not fully recover his sanity and undergo a complete character development. He is humbled by the realization of his insignificance in comparison to the world.
- Ironically, makes wicked, disloyal children heir.
- Lear is humbled by the symbolic storm representing his inner turmoil and increasing madness in addition to a frenzied confusion.
- Played by daughters through flattery to exile his only loyal child, Cordelia.

Gloucester
- Duke of Gloucester (title), father to Edmund (disloyal child) and Edgar (legitimate son and original heir to his lands and titles).
- Is deceived by the clever entrapment of his son and exiles Edgar for fear of being murdered, and thus makes Edmund heir.
- Neglects younger son, thus leading to his motivation for advancement through manipulation.
- Physical blindness suffered for attempting to aid the king symbolizes metaphorical blindness that Lear and Gloucester suffer: the true character of their children, appropriately represented by their meeting in Dover while in their wretched conditions.
- Humiliated through the experience of being blind and thus relying on others (Edgar in disguise) to aid him, comparable to Lear in the storm guided by Kent and his Fool. Also notable that in both these scenes each character finally show regard and consideration for their benefactor.